"Know thyself" (Socrates), "A question have I become for myself" (Augustine), "I think, therefore I am" (Descartes), and "The ego is neither formally nor materially *in* consciousness; it is outside, *in the world*" (Sartre) may be cited as evidence that Western philosophers have not ignored the problem of the self. But other philosophical problems, such as, the material world, the life of man in society, the structure of knowledge, and the meaning of values, have usually been given prior status in the West. For at least five hundred years Western man has found the external world more intriguing than the internal world. In this second half of the twentieth century he is beginning to suspect that he has paid too high a price for material progress. The possession of techniques of genocide forces him to ask, "Who am I?" He asks in his anxiety, "Have I mastered everything except myself?"

As Western man becomes increasingly uneasy about his nature and destiny, he sometimes looks hopefully to the East, and especially to India where philosophy has always been self-knowledge. "In that study of ourselves, of our true selves, India occupies a place second to no other country", wrote Max Müller. Śaṅkara, perhaps the greatest of all Indian philosophers, saw the life of man as a pilgrimage to his Self. Sir Arthur Eddington once expressed the same idea in different terms: "We have found a strange footprint on the shores of the unknown. We have devised profound theories, one after another, to account for its origin. At last, we have succeeded

(Continued on back-flap)

STUDIES IN PHILOSOPHY

II

THE SELF IN INDIAN PHILOSOPHY

by

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TO LAURIE

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TROY ORGAN

I. INTRODUCTION

For over two thousand years the ancient Greeks made pilgrimages through the hot valleys and the arid mountain passes to the lovely vale at the foot of Mt. Parnassus to consult the Delphic oracle for guidance in love, commerce, politics, and war. After a bath in Castalia, the sacred spring, and a change of garments they approached with awe the magnificent temple of Apollo to put their questions before Pythia. While stopping to rest after the climb up from the spring, they might have noticed an inscription on the façade of the temple, "Know thyself". Socrates was one of the few Greeks who heeded the admonition. He sought both to know himself and to prod the potential leaders of Athens into self-analysis. He called himself a *gadfly* and a *midwife* of young men pregnant with ideas. He believed he was rendering a noble service to the state by challenging the Athenians to become aware of their own ideas and ideals. But the citizens thought otherwise. They brought him to trial on charges of corrupting the youth and endangering established religion, declared him guilty, and ordered him put to death.

Concern about the existence and nature of the self has been a part of the beginning of each of the periods of Western philosophy. "Know thyself" was the aphorism which helped to launch the ancient period. The medieval period opened with Augustine who cried "*Quaestio mihi factus sum*" (A question have I become for myself). He finally found in Christianity a solace for his restless heart and mind. Descartes began the modern period with *Cogito ergo sum* (I think, therefore I am). The modern period came to an end between the two World Wars. Western philosophy is now

entering a period which for want of a better name may be called the *contemporary period.* It is a period in which the old problems of philosophy and the old methods are undergoing revisions. Two opposite reactions are made to the breakdown of traditional Western philosophy: one group are so concerned about maintaining the methods that they relinquish the problems, and the other are so concerned about the problems that they relinquish the methods. The former, which can be designated as *logical analysts, scientific empiricists,* or *logical positivists,* seek clarification of the meaning of language which can be used in science, ethics, religion, and art; the latter, the existentialists, hold that the real is the concrete and the existential, and repudiate attempts to grasp reality by linquistic and mental categories. Under the analysis of the first group the self or soul becomes meaningless, since "Primitive experience, mere existence of ordered data, does not presuppose a 'subject', or 'ego', or 'Me', or 'mind'."[1] The self in existentialism becomes an object transcendent to consciousness: "We should like to show here that the ego is neither formally nor materially *in* consciousness; it is outside, *in the world.* It is a being of the world, like the ego of another."[2] In these four periods of Western philosophy there is a movement from self-confidence to self-negation. Socrates, not doubting the reality of the self, advised man to examine himself. Augustine also believed in the reality of the self, but he was distressed by the conflicts he found in the self. Descartes felt obligated to demonstrate rationally that the self was a reality. Schlick negated the self, and Sartre found no self as subject and located the self as object in the external world.

Indian philosophers are convinced that Western philosophy and Western culture have been preoccupied with material things and appallingly neglectful of the self. Consider, for example, these criticisms of the West by the two greatest Indian philosophers of this century, Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan and Aurobindo Ghosh: "There is a tendency to overlook the spiritual and exalt the in-

[1] Moritz Schlick, "Meaning and Verification", *The Philosophical Review,* Vol. 45 (1936), p. 369.

[2] Jean-Paul Sartre, *The Transcendence of the Ego: An Existentialist Theory of Consciousness,* translated by Forrest Williams and Robert Kirkpatrick (New York, The Noonday Press, 1957), p. 31.

tellectual. It can be traced chiefly to the influence of the Greeks, who determined the bent of the Western mind towards science and the pursuit of truth for its own sake."[3] "When Greco-Roman civilization was triumphant, it failed to supply its conquered peoples with a religion, and instead, was itself conquered by a religion supplied by them. May it not be that today the peoples of Asia may supply a spiritual orientation to the new world based on science and technology. By its material and political devices, the West is able to provide a secure framework or order within which different civilizations could mingle, and fruitful intercourse between them can take place by which the spiritual poverty of the world can be overcome. Without a spiritual recovery, the scientific achievements threaten to destroy us."[4] "In the West where the syncretic tendency of the consciousness was replaced by the analytic and separative, the spiritual urge and the intellectual reason parted company almost at the outset; philosophy took from the first a turn towards a purely intellectual and ratiocinative explanation of things."[5] "The tendency of the normal Western mind is to live from below upward and from out inward . . . . The average European draws his guiding views not from the philosophic, but from the positive and the practical reason . . . . The West has *acquired* the religious mind rather than possessed it by nature and it has always worn its acquisition with a certain looseness . . . . The emphasis of the Western mind is on life, the outer life above all, the things that are grasped, visible, tangible. The inner life is taken only as an intelligent reflection of the outer world, with the reason for a firm putter of things into shape, an intelligent critic, builder, refiner of the external materials offered by Nature."[6]

[3] S. Radhakrishnan, *Eastern Religions and Western Thought* (London, Oxford University Press, 1939), p. 38.

[4] S. Radhakrishnan, "The Ancient Asian View of Man" in *Man's Right to Knowledge, An International Symposium Presented in Honor of the Two-hundreth Anniversary of Columbia University 1754–1954.* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1954), pp. 14-15.

[5] Aurobindo, *The Life Divine.* (New York, The Greystone Press, 1949), p. 782.

[6] Aurobindo, *The Foundations of Indian Culture* (New York, The Greystone Press, 1953), pp. 23, 65, 81, 94. For a non-philosophical criticism of American materialism see Prakash C. Jain, "How Materialism has Failed

Most thinking Westerners will probably admit that parts of these criticisms are justified, but they may wish to add that it is a terrible oversimplification to describe the West as *materialistic* and the East as *spiritual*, or Western philosophy as *outlook* and Eastern philosophy as *insight*. Radhakrishnan himself has recognized this fallacy: "There is not much truth in the pseudo-science of national or continental psychology which affirms that all Easterns are this and all Westerns are that. The history of any people is slightly more complicated than these sweeping statements would suggest." [7]

While it is true that the self as a spiritual subject has not been treated as comprehensively in the West as it has in India, the self has not been ignored by Western philosophers. Those who opened the periods of Western philosophy, as has already been noted, were motivated in part by a desire to understand the self. Other philosophical topics – the world of matter, man in society, the structure of knowledge, and the meaning of values – have frequently been given priority. Nevertheless, the self has been examined by many of the great Western philosophers. Plato sought knowledge of the self because he regarded this as a study of intrinsic worth and also as a study which illuminated his theory of the state. Aristotle's *De Anima* (On the Soul) compares favorably with the treatment given in some of the systems of Indian philosophy. He appreciated the place of self-knowledge in man's understanding of the nature of things: "The knowledge of the soul admittedly contributes greatly to the advance of truth in general, and, above all, to our understanding of Nature, for the soul is in some sense the principle of animal life." [8] He also realized the problem of establishing reliable knowledge about the self: "To attain any assured knowledge about the soul is one of the most difficult things in the world." [9] Epictetus gave a typical Greek

in the Foreign-Aid Program", *United States News and World Report* (October 19, 1959). See also Prakash C. Jain, "The Friendly Americans", *The Saturday Evening Post* (July 23, 1960), pp. 24, 69-70.

7 S. Radhakrishnan, *East and West* (New York, Harper and Brothers, 1956), p. 13.

8 *De Anima*, 402 a 4-6. J. A. Smith translation.

9 *De Anima*, 402 a 10. J. A. Smith translation.

observation about the soul, *i.e.*, the soul is the mind: "Of our faculties in general you will find that none can take cognizance of itself . . . (except) that faculty which takes cognizance of itself and of things else. What is this? The reasoning faculty: for this alone of the faculties we have received is created to comprehend even its own nature." [10] For Plotinus the soul when it comes to itself alone becomes identified with the Absolute: "When the soul descends, she will by her nature never reach complete nothingness. She will fall into evil and, in this sense, into nothingness, but not into complete nothingness. In a similar way, when the soul reverses her direction, she does not arrive at something different, but at herself. But as she is in herself alone and not even in the world of Being, she is in the existence beyond. We too transcend Being by virtue of the soul with which we are united . . . . Such is the life of the gods and of divine and blessed men, detachment from all things here below, scorn of all earthly pleasures, and flight of the alone to the alone." [11] In Boethius' charming and tragic autobiographical story Philosophia reminds Boethius, "You have forgotten who you are." Abaelard wrote a book entitled *Scito te ipsum* (Know thyself). Eckhardt advised, "No one has known God who has not known himself." Kant in the Preface to the First Edition of his *Critique of Pure Reason* said of his book, "It is a call to reason to undertake anew the most difficult of all its tasks, namely, that of self-knowledge." [12] Hume attacked the whole notion of the self with his typical skepticism: "There are some philosophers who imagine we are every moment intimately conscious of what we call our *self* . . . . For my part, when I enter most intimately into what I call *myself*, I always stumble on some particular perception or other, of heat or cold, light or shade, love or hatred, pain or pleasure. I never catch *myself* at any time without a perception, and never can observe anything but the perception . . . . I may venture to affirm of the rest of mankind, that they are nothing but a bundle or collection of different perceptions, which succeed each other with an inconceivable rapidity,

10 *Discourses*, I. 1. P. E. Matheson translation.

11 *Enneads*, VI. 9. Joseph Katz translation.

12 *Critique of Pure Reason*, A xi. Norman Kemp Smith translation.

and are in a perpetual flux and movement."[13] In the Appendix to the *Treatise* Hume became skeptical of his own skepticism: "Upon a more strict review of the section concerning *personal identity*, I find myself involved in such a labyrinth that, I must confess, I neither know how to correct my former opinions, nor how to render them consistent . . . . I must plead the privilege of a sceptic, and confess that this difficulty is too hard for my understanding." Bradley refuted the Humean view that "the self is no more than 'collective', than a collection of sensations, and ideas, and emotions, and volitions swept together with one another and after one another by 'the laws of association' " and added, "The only thing which after all is hard to see is this, that we ourselves, who apprehend the illusion (*i.e.*, the illusion that there is something in the self that underlies the collection) are ourselves the illusion, which is apprehended by us."[14] For Emerson "The consciousness in each man is a sliding scale, which identifies him now with the First Cause, and now with the flesh of his body."[15] William James held that the constituents of the self may be divided into four selves: material self, social self, spiritual self, and pure ego.[16] F. R. Tennant believed, "No one has really dispensed with the subject of consciousness, whatever terms he may have used to hush up its existence."[17] And George Arthur Wilson gave the self a central position in all metaphysics: "The great lesson that the history of philosophy teaches with the emphasis of repetition is the fragmentary character of all world views that ignore the central position of the self."[18]

These references, chosen almost at random and listed in chronological order, show that the self has not been ignored as a topic for philosophical study in the West. But in spite of this evidence

[13] *A Treatise of Human Nature,* I. IV. 6.
[14] Francis Herbert Bradley, *Ethical Studies* (Oxford, The Clarendon Press, 1927), pp. 36, 37, 39.
[15] Essay on "Experience".
[16] *The Principles of Psychology,* Vol. 1, ch. 10.
[17] *Philosophical Theology,* Vol. 1 (Cambridge, The University Press, 1935), p. 18.
[18] *The Self and its World* (New York, The Macmillan Company, 1926), p. 275.

it must be admitted that for the last five hundred years Western man has found the external world more intriguing than the internal world.

There have been four forces determining Western man to look outward rather than inward. One was the discovery of a vast relatively unpopulated continent which could be explored, exploited, and colonized. Another force was the Renaissance, the revival of classical learning, which opened the minds of Europeans to another view of life on earth than the one which had dominated Western man for over one thousand years – a view which stressed the pursuit of beauty, wisdom, and happiness. A third force was the industrial revolution which promised tremendous improvement in food, clothing, shelter, transportation, and communication. Finally, there were social, political, and religious reforms and revolutions which revealed that change was possible even in these areas.

Man's imagination was titillated as it had never been before. The West embarked upon a period of active involvement with the riches of this life rather than hopes of riches in the next and with the world outside the self rather than the world within the self. Solitary occupations such as exploring, hunting, trapping, and gold prospecting fostered self-reliance, independence, and fearlessness, but it is only in the roughest sense that men of the American frontier such as Daniel Boone, Johnny Appleseed, and Jim Bridger can be described as *self-knowers*. Western man was too busy clearing the land, planting and harvesting, buying and selling, to examine the self. He was largely concerned with pushing back physical frontiers. He cut the forests, dammed the rivers, mined the mountains, and brought oil and gas up from the bowels of the earth; he climbed the highest mountains, sank to the deepest parts of the ocean, explored the tropical jungles, and moved under the ice of the Arctic regions. Until very recently it looked as if the only remaining frontier was the self. In 1958 an author wrote, "Today Americans have no outer or geographic frontier left to conquer. This pushes us, instead, to increasingly inward conquests . . . . Therefore, let us stop being defensive, stop being apologetic about affirming the dignity and importance of the so-called impractical:

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namely, the humanistic and the spiritual studies."[19] The author overlooked the fact that a new physical frontier had been discovered, the frontier of space. Now it appears that for several generations Western man will continue to devote his energies primarily to the intellectual quest and the physical conquest of the external world. What the landing of men on the moon and on the planets may lead to staggers the imagination of everyone except the writers of science fiction. The last frontier – the self – is being held for the *last*.

Modern Western man's activity has become an opiate which deadens his self-awareness, and the man who enjoys solitude hides the fact as though it were a secret sin. The Greek word for solitude (ἴδιος) has become a term of reproach: an utter fool, an idiot. Yet Western man still longs for solitude. His country estates, lakeside cottages, week-end farms, hunting lodges, hiking camps, and suburban homes are retreats from activity, although they are usually designed to secure strength for returning to the *organization* where telephone, committee meeting, and conference dull those fleeting questions of ultimate value which may have popped into the mind during a vacation. The individual caught in this whirl calls it a *rat race* or a *treadmill*. He may even say that he wants to get out of it, but he fears to make the break. He feels at times he is fleeing from something – never suspecting it may be himself. A recent study of American life reported that "a continuing tension between the needs of the organization and the integrity of the person . . . may well be one of the most fateful struggles of our future".[20] In spite of the busy-itis which affects Western man, a period of enforced solitude can drive him back to himself. A recent news story about five young men who live for one year at a time without relief at the United States Coast Guard's Cape Spencer Lighthouse two miles off the Alaskan coast, reported an observation of one of the men: "With so much time to think, you begin to wonder who you are."

[19] Peter Viereck, "The Unadjusted Man", *Saturday Review of Literature* (November 1, 1958), p. 13.
[20] *Fourth Report of the Special Studies Project of the Rockefeller Brothers' Fund* (1958).

Another reason why Western man lags in his understanding of himself is because he has constructed an ideal for trustworthy knowledge which can be achieved in the physical sciences, but which cannot be achieved in the knowledge of himself. Reliable knowledge, he has determined, must be intersubjectively testable, quantitatively measurable, and linquistically expressable. Unfortunately, the "knowledge of ourselves will never attain the elegant simplicity, the abstractness, and the beauty of physics. The factors that have retarded its development are not likely to vanish. We must realize that the science of man is the most difficult of all sciences".[21]

Western man is paying a heavy price for his concentration on the external world, and he is becoming aware of that price. Not all is well with himself, nor with his civilization. Because he has been unable to solve international problems peacefully, he has developed means to wage war which might result in genocide. He is horrified by the Frankenstein he has made. Leonardo da Vinci refused to make public his plans for a submarine, because, as he said, man was too devilish to be entrusted with such an invention. Likewise Leo Szilard, the physicist who instigated the making of the first atomic bomb, wrote to the President of the United States urging that it not be used; and after the bomb was used the scientists who worked on the development of the release of atomic energy formed a federation to promote international control of atomic energy. The situation is now so serious that some have entertained the notion of scrapping all scientific advances of the last three hundred and fifty years: "If the dismantling of every factory, if the extirpation of every item of scientific knowledge that has been accumulated since 1600, were the price of mankind's continuance, we must be ready to pay that terrible price."[22]

The personal price that Western man pays for his concentration on externalities is anxiety. Man has gained mastery of almost everything except himself. Lacking the power to direct himself

[21] Alexis Carrol, *Man, the Unknown* (Middlesex, Penguin Books, 1935, 1948), p. 23.
[22] Lewis Mumford, *Values for Survival; Essays, Addresses and Letters on Politics and Education* (New York, Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1946), p. 80.

he becomes an "outer-directed" person. He guides himself like a blind man by touching things and people, rather than like a man with eyes who sees where he wants to go and moves purposively toward that goal. His anxiety reveals itself in emptiness, loneliness, shallowness, and fear. Modern Western man sees himself as Willy Loman in Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* about whom Bibb, the son of Willy, said, "He had the wrong dreams . . . . He never knew who he was", and as Edward Chamberlayne in T. S. Eliot's *The Cocktail Party*, who said of his deserting wife:

> And I must get her back, to find out what has happened
> During the five years that we've been married.
> I must find out who she is, to find out who I am.

According to Rollo May, "One of the few blessings of living in an age of anxiety is that we are forced to become aware of ourselves. When our society, in its time of upheaval in standards and values, can give us no clear idea of 'what we are and what we ought to be', as Matthew Arnold puts it, we are thrown back on the search for ourselves."[23]

As Western man becomes increasingly uneasy about his life he sometimes looks hopefully to the East for help. If it is true that "the historical situation in which we find ourselves presents us with a philosophical problem for solution, and . . . this problem concerns the form of the personal",[24] then he is right in looking to the East, and particularly to India, where philosophy has always been self-knowledge (*adhyātma śāstra*). One modern Indian philosopher has written, "the problem of the self is the one problem in discussing which Indian genius has showed itself at its best".[25] Max Müller, the German Indologist, made a similar observation: "in that study of ourselves, of our true selves, India occupies a place second to no other country".[26]

23 *Man's Search for Himself* (New York, W. W. Norton and Co., 1953), p. 7.
24 John Macmurray, *Form of the Personal*, Vol. 1 (New York, Harper and Brothers, 1957), p. 21.
25 A. C. Mukerji, *Self, Thought and Reality* (Allahabad, The Juvenile Press, 1933), p. 336.
26 *India: What Can It Teach Us?* (New York, Funk and Waggnalls, 1883),

In approaching the philosophy of India with the expectation of discovering assistance in self-realization, two extremes must be avoided: one is what Charles Eliot called "curiously crude contempt", the other is what René Guénon called "false assimilation". Indian philosophy must not be treated as a museum in which to view oddities, nor as a fountainhead of truths which need only be lifted out of India and transplanted in the West. Aurobindo and Radhakrishnan, pro-Indian as they are, do not claim India has a monopoly on wisdom and virtue: "In India, if the result has been a great heaping up of the treasures of the Spirit – or of some of them –, it has also been a great bankruptcy of Life; in Europe, the fullness of riches and the triumphant mastery of this world's powers and possessions have progressed towards an equal bankruptcy in the things of the Spirit."[27] "The new world for which the old is in travail is still like an embryo. The components are all there; what is lacking is the integration, the completeness which is organic consciousness, the binding together of the different elements, making them breathe and come to life . . . . We must recognize humbly the partial and defective character of our isolated traditions and seek their source in the generic tradition from which they all have sprung."[28]

Man is on a pilgrimage to his own Self, said Śaṅkara. The

p. 33. Compare the following from *Kim*, the novel of Rudyard Kipling:

"Now am I alone – all alone," he thought. "In all India is no one so alone as I! If I die to-day, who shall bring the news – and to whom? If I live and God is good, there will be a price upon my head, for I am a Son of the Charm – I, Kim."

A very few white people, but many Asiatics, can throw themselves into amazement as it were by repeating their own names over and over again to themselves, letting the mind go free upon speculation as to what is called personal identity. When one grows older, the power, usually, departs, but while it lasts it may descend upon a man at any moment.

"Who is Kim – Kim – Kim?"

He squatted in a corner of the clanging waiting-room, rapt from all other thoughts; hands folded in lap, and pupils contracted to pin-points. In a minute – in another half second – he felt he would arrive at the solution of the tremendous puzzle; but here, as always happens, his mind dropped away from those heights with the rush of a wounded bird, and passing his hand before his eyes, he shook his head."

27 Aurobindo, *The Life Divine*, p. 11.
28 Radhakrishnan, *Eastern Religions and Western Thought*, pp. 19, 347.

realization of this fact sometimes appears in the Indian tradition and in the Western tradition in ways which are markedly alike, although couched in divergent settings. Vedāntic books give the following story told by an ancient Indian teacher to his students: Ten men were once fording a swift river. Upon reaching the other shore, they counted themselves to see if all had arrived safely, but alas – each man could count but nine men. A passer-by, hearing their wailing over the loss of a comrade, counted the men and discovered they were ten. He then asked each man to count, and when the counter counted but nine, the stranger touched him on the chest and said, "Thou art the tenth." The teacher would then draw the moral: reality can be found not in books, nor in the heavens, nor on the earth, but in the self – "That art thou." An English scientist put it this way: "We have found a strange footprint on the shores of the unknown. We have devised profound theories, one after another, to account for its origin. At last, we have succeeded in reconstructing the creature that made the footprint. And Lo! it is our own." [29]

[29] A. S. Eddington, *Space, Time and Gravitation* (Cambridge, The University Press, 1920), p. 201.

II. THE SELF IN THE RIG VEDA

Religion is older than philosophy. Man worships the unknown before he attempts to understand it. Prayers, sacrifices, and rituals were some of the earliest responses he made to the world around him. The Sioux prayed before going into battle, "I wish to kill a Pawnee. I desire to bring horses when I return. I long to pull down an enemy. I promise you a calico shirt and a robe. I will give you a blanket also, O Wakanda, if you allow me to return in safety after killing a Pawnee." The Aztec warriors, rather than killing their enemies in combat, captured them and gave them to the priests, who at appointed times and to the accompaniment of the booming war drums, led the unfortunate victims up the winding stairs to the top of the tower temples to be killed as sacrifices to the gods. The ancient Hebrew women on the seventh day after the birth of a son or on the fourteenth day after the birth of a daughter, brought a lamb and a turtledove or pigeon to the tabernacle to be killed and burned to cleanse themselves from the defilement of childbirth. The Dobuans of Melanesia performed a magical ritual at time of yam planting which included a charm to make the vines twine like the web-spinning of the spider (*kapali*): "Kapali, kapali, twisting around, he laughs with joy." Such religious activities contain conceptions about the world and man which might be called *germinal philosophy*. Genuine philosophy is not created until these conceptions are defined and defended by rational arguments.

The germinal philosophy of India first appeared in poems, chants, and prayers used in the worship of the ancient gods of

nature. Some of these hymns (*mantras, sūktas*) may have been composed as early as 6000 B.C. All that can be affirmed with certainty is that a few of the hymns were created by the Indo-Aryans prior to their migration into northwest India in the middle of the second millennium B.C. After moving into the subcontinent, the Indo-Aryans composed more hymns for the deliberate purpose of strengthening their own culture and preventing its absorption into the culture of the dark-skinned inhabitants of the valleys. These people, whom the invaders called "Those whose faces do not shine", are now known as the Dravidians. Their hymns of praise and petition to the gods of nature for rain, food, health, children, and long life are prized by scholars as being among the finest expressions of early man's religious devotion. A few contain speculations which set forth some of the basic problems in Indian philosophy.

In spite of the efforts of the proud Indo-Aryans to avoid assimilation with the Dravidians, there was a mixing of blood and cultures, until in time a new name was needed for this people. As dwellers in the valley of the Indus River they came to be called *Hindus*, and later, *Indians*. The collections of poems, prayers, lyrics, and magical charms were called *Vedas*, that is, "bits of wisdom", from the root *vid* (to know) – a word related to the German *wissen* and the English *wit*. These writings have been collected into four groups: *Rig Yajur, Sāma,* and *Atharva*. The *Rig Veda* is the largest, the oldest, and the most important of the four groups. The second and third are respectively prose and metrical arrangements of the *Rig mantras* for priestly and liturgical functions. The *Atharva* is a much later collection written by those who were chiefly interested in charms and incantations. The *mantras* of the *Rig Veda* reveal the religious ideas and practices of Indians one millennium B.C. The "all surveying sun", "pouring rain", thunderbolts which "furrow the earth with their chariot-wheels", "life-sustaining waters", and the "strong heaven" are the objects of worship. The gods are besought for gifts of horses, cattle, food, and progeny. The prayers to the gods plead over and over again for favors: "Destroy every one that reviles us; slay every one that does us injury: Indra, of boundless wealth, enrich us with thousands of excellent cows and horses."[1] The gods are near. Their compassion is not hard to win. Earth, not some far-off Olympus, is the scene of their activity. Men turn their thoughts naturally to the gods, and the gods look beneficiently upon men.

Although these ancient hymns are primarily god-directed, the metrical petitions of the *Rig Veda* give occasional glimpses of what the Vedic Indians believed about the self. For example, in the tenth *mandala* (cycle) of the *Rig* is a prayer to Agni, the fire god, which is to be chanted at the time of cremation of a corpse: "Agni, consume him not entirely; afflict him not; scatter not here and there his skin and his body; when Jātavedas, thou has rendered him mature, then send him to the Pitris."[2] This is one of the earliest indications that the Vedic people believed in a permanent self, for the assumption of the prayer is that some part of the person can survive the fire of cremation.

Rig Veda I. 22. 8. is a remarkable *sūkta* because of its great length but more remarkable is the fact that it is an illuminating exception to the usual search for final causes outside the self. This *sūkta* is regarded by Sāyana, a great Indian commentator on the Vedas, as one designed to inculcate the doctrine of the Vedānta, that is, the philosophy of monistic idealism. A more probable hypothesis is that it is a glorification of the sun, "the Lord of Men with seven sons" (the seven solar rays). In stanza 31 the *rishi* (seer) states, "I have beheld the unwearied protector of the universe, the sun, traveling upwards and downwards by various paths: inverted with aggregative and diffusive radiance, he revolves in the midst of the regions." He continues in stanza 33, "Heaven is my parent and progenitor: the navel of the earth is my kinsman: the spacious earth is my mother." In stanza 37 the author makes an unexpected about-face, turning from positive statements about the external world to puzzlement about himself: "I distinguish not if I am this

[1] *Rig Veda*, I. 6. 6. 7. All quotations from the *Rig Veda* are from the translation of H. H. Wilson, the first English translation which was first printed in 1850 and thereafter. – H. H. Wilson, *Rig-Veda-Sanhita: A Collection of Ancient Hindu Hymns of the Rig-Veda*, Vols. 1-6 (Poona, Ashtekar and Co., 1925–1928).

[2] *Rig Veda*, X. 1. 16. 1. *Jātavedas* is a Vedic epithet for fire. *Pitris* is a name for the manes.

all; for I go perplexed, and bound in mind." This line, so strangely out of keeping with the rest of the *Rig Veda*, sets the pattern for Indian thought to this day: *ātmavidyā* (self-knowledge). One Indian philosopher surmises, "This is perhaps, the earliest instance of a man's reflection upon his own self." [3]

The Sanskrit words used most frequently in Indian philosophy to denote the self are *ātman* and *jīva*. Hence, the first step in tracing the development of the Indian conception of the self is to discover the various meanings of these words in the *mantras* of the *Rig Veda*. References to the self are rare in these writings, for these *mantras* were composed as practical tools for securing favors from the gods and not as metaphysical treatises to satisfy man's desire to know. The word *ātman* is used thirty times in the *Rig Veda*; *tman*, a contracted form of *ātman* is used seventy-eight times; *jīva* occurs twenty-three times by itself and ten times as part of a compound word.[4] Etymologically, *ātman* means *breath* and *jīva* means *life*. *Ātman* means *breath* in the cremation petition to Agni that the whole being of the dead person be not destroyed in the pyre: "Let the eye repair to the sun; the breath (*ātman*) to the wind." [5] In a *sūkta* to Varuna the *rishi* sings, "Thy spirit (*ātman*) is the wind; he sends abroad the waters: he, the cherisher of the world, is the feeder on sacrificial food, like an animal upon fodder." [6]

Ātman sometimes is used to denote the body. A hymn addressed to medicinal plants reads, "The virtues of the plants which are desirous of bestowing wealth issue from them, man, towards thy body (*ātman*) like cattle from the pen." [7] Even more striking is the use of *ātman* to denote the whole body as distinguished from part of the body. An incantation to cure tuberculosis reads, "I banish disease from thy urethra, from thy bladder, from thy hair, from thy nails, from thy whole person (*ātman*). I banish

[3] S. K. Saksena, *Nature of Consciousness in Hindu Philosophy* (Benares, Nand Kishore and Brothers, 1944), p. 22.
[4] H. G. Narahari, *Ātman in Pre-Upanisadic Vedic Literature* (Adyar, Madras, The Vasanta Press, 1944), pp. 5, 9.
[5] *Rig Veda,* X. 1. 16. 3.
[6] *Rig Veda,* VII. 5. 17. 2.
[7] *Rig Veda,* X. 8. 7. 8.

disease from each limb, from each hair, from each joint where it is generated, from thy whole person (*ātman*)." [8]

The word *ātman* becomes life or existence in other passages, *e.g.*, "Increase, divine Indra, for us throughout the earth, abundant food, that it may be as plentiful as water, by which, hero, thou bestowest upon us existence (*tman*) as thou causest water to flow on every side." [9] In another passage the author says that the life principle, the *ātman*, is connected with the body but that it is nowhere perceptible as a separate object. It cannot be apprehended as an object: "Who has seen the primeval being at the time of his being born: what is that endowed with substance which the unsubstantial sustains: from earth are the breath and blood, but were is the soul (*ātman*) who may repair to the sage to ask this?" [10] *Ātman* as life appears also in a *sūkta* to Parjanya, a Vedic rain god: "May he, the bull, be the impregnator of the perpetual plants, for in him is the vitality (*ātman*) of both the fixed and moveable worlds: may the rain sent by him preserve me for a hundred years: and do you gods ever cherish us with blessings." [11] *Jīva* is used either as life or as individual life in the following three selections: "Arise, aspiring life (*jīva*) revives: darkness has departed; light approaches. Ushas has opened the road for the sun to travel." [12] "Rise, woman, and go to the world of living beings (*jīvas*)." [13] "I erect this circle of stones for the protection of the living (*jīva*)." [14]

In another hymn *ātman* becomes the soul of man and is, like Agni, the source of happiness: "He (Agni) who is like the divine Sun, who knows the truth of things, preserves by his actions his votaries in all encounters; like nature, he is unchangeable, and, like soul (*ātman*), is the source of happiness." [15]

Ātman is used to mean the self in the following three selections:

[8] *Rig Veda,* X. 12. 12. 5-6.
[9] *Rig Veda,* I. 1. 11. 8.
[10] *Rig Veda,* I. 22. 8. 4.
[11] *Rig Veda,* VII. 6. 12. 6.
[12] *Rig Veda,* I. 16. 8. 16.
[13] *Rig Veda,* X. 2. 2. 8.
[14] *Rig Veda,* X. 2. 2. 4.
[15] *Rig Veda,* I. 12. 9. 2.

"Let Indra, the slayer of Vritra, quaff the Soma on the Sharyanavat, infusing strength into himself (*ātman*), about to show great prowess."[16] "Thou flowest, Indu, the inviolable, the most exhilarating; thou art thyself (*ātman*) the best support of Indra."[17] "Plants! thus I hail you, the divine mothers of mankind. I will give to thee, Oh Physician, a horse, a cow, a garment – yea, even myself (*ātman*)."[18]

Ātman appears as essence, or the inner and real nature of things, in other hymns, *e.g.*, "Worship the wind, the soul (*ātman*) of all, to obtain excellent food."[19] In another passage *ātman* is used as the essence of an illness, or perhaps more animistically as the ghost of an illness: "As soon as I take these plants in my hand making the sick man strong, the soul (*ātman*) of the malady perishes before their application as life is driven away from the presence of the seizer of life."[20]

These quotations indicate that the *rishis* believed man is a self which is other than the body. He will not be entirely destroyed with the destruction of his body. The cremation hymn cited earlier states, "When he proceeds to that world of spirits, then he becomes subject to the will of the gods."[21] Death was not regarded as a punishment. It was the termination of life – inescapable, but not to be dreaded. "Yāma preserves our loved bodies", says one *rishi*.[22] This means, according to the commentator Sāyana, that Yāma, the god of death, does not take away life as a consequent of a fault in human behavior. Yāma "knows our well-being and leads us to 'pasture no one can take from us'."[23] That is, Yāma guides the departed to a pleasant place from which they shall not be dispossessed. The dead shall proceed by paths trodden by forefathers. They shall be united with their ancestors in the highest heaven. In other parts of the *Rig Veda* Pūshan, a sun god, "the

[16] *Rig Veda,* IX. 7. 10. 1.
[17] *Rig Veda,* IX. 4. 18. 3. Indu here denotes *soma,* the intoxicating drink enjoyed by both gods and men.
[18] *Rig Veda,* X. 8. 7. 4.
[19] *Rig Veda,* X. 8. 2. 13.
[20] *Rig Veda,* X. 8. 7. 11.
[21] *Rig Veda,* X. 1 16. 2.
[22] *Rig Veda,* X. 1. 13. 4.
[23] *Rig Veda,* X. 1. 14. 2.

protector of all beings", transfers the spirits of the dead "to a better world". He will go first on "the excellent path", a path "that is most free from peril." Vāyu, a wind god, will protect along the way, and Sāvitrī, another sun deity, will place the departed "where the virtuous abide".[24] The most detailed account of the heaven of the righteous emphasizes that the Vedic heaven is a place of perpetual light with abundance of food. It is a place "where there is happiness, pleasures, joy and enjoyment, where the wishes of the wisher are obtained".[25] Sinners, those who neglected the sacrifices to the gods, are consigned by Indra "to lower darkness".[26] Those false in thought and speech go to the "deep abyss of hell".[27] There are a few accounts of souls of the dead which are requested to return to earth.[28] *Rig Veda* X. 4. 16. is obviously an incantation, since each of the eleven stanzas of the *sūkta* end with the refrain: "we bring back that spirit of thine to dwell here, to live long". There is no indication of belief in *samsāra* (reincarnation) in the *Rig Veda.*

Earthly life and its satisfactions far outweighed the joy of the anticipation of heaven among the Vedics. A full life of "a hundred autumns" was the desire of the composers of the hymns. This lust for life is found particularly in the early *mantras*, such as this one to Ushas, the goddess of dawn: "The divine Ushas lights up with her beams the quarters of the heavens; she has thrown off her gloomy form, and, awaking those who sleep, comes in her car drawn by purple steeds. Bringing with her life-sustaining blessings, and giving consciousness to the unconscious, she imparts to the world her wonderful radiance . . . Arise; inspiring life revives; darkness has departed; light approaches."[29] The predominantly cheerful religion of the Vedics has led some students to conclude that these people were completely hedonistic, consuming great quantities of *ghee* and *soma*, sporting continually with women, and having no thoughts more serious than the procurement of a

[24] *Rig Veda,* X. 2. 1. 3-5.
[25] *Rig Veda,* IX. 7. 10. 7-11.
[26] *Rig Veda,* X. 12. 1. 4.
[27] *Rig Veda,* IV. 1. 5. 5.
[28] *Rig Veda,* I. 8. 1. 18; X. 4. 16.
[29] *Rig Veda,* I. 16. 8. 14-16.

wide variety of amusements. This is far from a complete picture, for even in the early hymns the shadows of a sense of sin darken men's lives. At first this feeling of sin was no more than the awareness of having neglected sacrifices or having given inadequate gifts to the gods. "Inasmuch as all people commit errors", says one hymn, "so do we, divine Varuna, daily disfigure thy worship by imperfections." [30] Sometimes the confession of guilt takes on a wider note as in the *mantra* which begs, "Take away whatever sin has been found in me, whether I have knowingly done wrong, or have pronounced imprecations against holy men, or have spoken untruth." [31] Even gossip was singled out as a sin: "Whatever sin we have committed by speaking to others, speaking against others, speaking evil about others, whether waking or sleeping, may Agni remove all such hateful sins far from us." [32] One *rishi* acknowledged his own sinfulness, and referring to himself in the third person, prayed, "O gods raise again the man, O gods, who has sunk: O gods, give life again to the man, O gods, who has committed sin." [33] The spirit of pessimism entered a few *mantras* from the close of the Vedic period (about 1000 B.C.). In one the poet said that, whereas formerly he was distressed by the invitation of death to join those who had gone before, now he welcomed the opportunity to escape from this vale of sorrow: "In that leafy tree where Yāma drinks with the gods, there the progenitor, the lord of the house, invites me to join the men of old. At first I beheld him with anguish inviting me to join the men of olden time, and walking with that fell design; but afterwards I longed for him." [34]

Indian thinkers in later periods came to conceive of the self as a soul which had neither beginning nor end. Hence a single reference in the *Rig Veda* to an unborn portion of man has special significance. Agni is asked to temper, but not to destroy, the *ajo bhāga* (unborn portion) at the cremation: "The unborn portion;

[30] *Rig Veda,* I. 6. 2. 1.
[31] *Rig Veda,* I. 5. 6. 22.
[32] *Rig Veda,* X. 12. 13. 3.
[33] *Rig Veda,* X. 11. 9. 1.
[34] *Rig Veda,* X. 11. 7. 1-2.

burn that, Agni, with thy heat." [35] Later in the same *sūkta* Agni is described as "the flesh-devouring deity".

Another Vedic belief about the self which stands out, in view of later developments in Hinduism, is the recognition of individual differences in men. Each person is a unique person, sharing a likeness with others yet at the same time possessing in himself qualities which make him unlike any one else. "The two hands are alike, but they do not perform the same work; two cows at the same time do not yield the same milk; two twins have not the same strength; two persons of the same family do not display equal liberality." [36]

In at least one *mantra* the self is described as that which is hidden (or that which hides). It is an illusion in appearance, although not an illusion in reality. Indra, the real Indra, presents himself as Agni, or Viśnu, or Rudra, but these are but manifestations of Indra. "Indra, the prototype, has assumed various forms, and such is his form as that which he adopts for his manifestation: Indra, multiform by his illusions, proceeds to his many worshippers, for the horses yoked to his car are a thousand." [37] This may be interpreted as an anticipation of the doctrine of *māyā* or illusion.

The best known *mantra* of the *Rig Veda* is the "Hymn of Creation", [38] which attempts to push speculation back to a time before being or non-being: "The non-existent was not, the existent was not; then the world was not, nor the firmament, nor that which is above the firmament." [39] The poem is strikingly similar to a work of the early Greek philosopher Parmenides. One difference is that while Parmenides merely suggests that desire ("Love . . . the first born of the gods") might be the agent of creation, the Vedic seer places desire (*Kāma*) in a central position. Aristotle says Parmenides' use of love as the efficient cause of motion is "obscure and confused" [40] and adds that Parmenides and other

[35] *Rig Veda,* X. 1. 16. 4.
[36] *Rig Veda,* X. 10. 5. 9.
[37] *Rig Veda,* VI. 4. 4. 18.
[38] *Rig Veda,* X. 11. 1.
[39] *Rig Veda,* X. 11. 1. 1.
[40] *Metaphysics,* 985 a 12.

early Greek philosophers who introduce love as a factor "do not seem to understand the significance of their own statements".[41] The reference to love or desire in the *Rig Veda*, on the other hand, is explicit: "In the beginning there was desire, which was the first seed of mind; sages having meditated in their hearts have discovered by their wisdom the connexion of the existent and the non-existent." [42] Was the *rishi* capable of the highly abstract notion of a reified, incorporeal desire existing before the formation of the world, or does this passage mean that since desire implies a desirer and a desired, a subject and an object, a self and a not-self, therefore the *rishi* is stating that in the beginning there was a self? The last two stanzas show that the author had a cosmic Self [43] in mind: "Who really knows? who in this world may declare it? whence was this creation, whence was it engendered? The gods were subsequent to the world's creation; so who knows whence it arose? He from whom this creation arose, he may uphold it, or he may not (no one else can): he who is its superintendent in the highest heaven, he assuredly knows, or if he knows not (no one else does)." [44] In the beginning was a Self. From this Self arose the gods, the world, and men. To identify this Self and to relate man to it is the whole of the philosophical enterprise of India, and perhaps man's most significant quest.

[41] *Metaphysics,* 985 a 17.
[42] *Rig Veda,* X. 11. 1. 4.
[43] The cosmic self will hereafter be designated by *Self*; the individual self by *self*.
[44] *Rig Veda,* X. 11. 1. 6-7.

III. THE SELF IN THE UPANISHADS

Man will not leave his gods alone. He is not satisfied that the gods exist, receive prayers, and allocate the goods of life according to divine justice. He must prove their existence, channel their gifts through human instruments, and create systems of thought to account for the granting and withholding of divine benefactions. Man pays a penalty for his sacrilege. He loses the pristine harmonious relationship with the gods; and, if he persists in his probing into divine affairs, he slays his own gods. So it was in Greece, and so it was in India. While the Vedic priests were chanting their *mantras* of praise and petition to the gods of nature, others retreated into the forests to mediate upon the themes of the *Rig Veda*. These forest philosophers attracted pupils who sat at their feet to attain wisdom. The instruction given to the student was called an *upanishad*. The word *upanishad* etymologically means to *sit close by devoutly*, but it came to denote the teaching imparted by the *guru* to the pupil who sat near because the instruction was intended only for the ears of the initiate, and finally the word meant *a secret doctrine*.

These oral teachings were in the course of time placed in written form. They are for the most part interpretations and developments of ideas inherent in the *Rig Veda*. Over one hundred of the Upanishads are extant, but only eleven or twelve are of philosophical significance. Cārvāka, and Buddhist philosophers rejected much of the Upanishads yet claimed respect for them, while Sāṅkhya-Yoga, Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, Mīmāṁsā, and Vedānta philosophers drew their basic ideas and fundamental support from the Upanishads. Each orthodox Indian philosopher claimed that his

philosophy was the correct interpretation of the scriptures, although this claim to authority did not mean that he repudiated the similar claims of the supporters of the other philosophies. Many of India's leaders have derived inspiration from the Upanishads. Ram Mohan Roy, the founder of the Brāhmo Samāj, one of the most enlightened religious movements in Hinduism in the nineteenth century, was the first Hindu to make an English translation of the Upanishads. Aurobindo Ghosh, the most creative Hindu philosopher of the twentieth century, presented his integral yoga as the true interpretation of the *Rig Veda* and the Upanishads. Both Mahatma Gandhi and Vinoba Bhave regarded the first stanza of the *Īśā Upanishad* as the manifesto of their political and economic campaigns.

The Upanishads are the third and latest portions of the Vedic writings. The hymns (*mantras*) of the poets are the earliest writings; the rules (*brāhmaṇas*) for the proper conduct of rituals come next; the Upanishads, speculations of seers, are last. The divisions are not as distinct as this classification suggests, for in the Upanishads are rituals, poems, and prayers as well as philosophical speculations. The Upanishads do not constitute an integrated philosophical system. They give every appearance of being miscellaneous collections of writings which have been preserved and organized without much concern for the presentation of a consistent point of view.

Modern scholars are blocked at many points in their efforts to understand the Upanishads because of the great difficulty in establishing the dates of the composition of the various writings. The Indians were a traditional-minded people, but not a historical-minded people; that is, they were concerned about the preservation of the continuity of their culture but had little interest in the precise dating of events. This attitude may have been the outgrowth of the cyclical theory of time which accompanies the doctrines of personal reincarnations and cosmic cycles (*kalpas*). The best guess at present is that the Upanishads were written between 800 and 300 B.C., which means that while some of them antedate the life of the Buddha, others were written after the Buddhist reformation. The form in which the Upanishads are written also

creates problems for the student. Many passages are written as dialogues, in which, like those of Plato, plot is secondary to the flow of the conversation. Many of the dialogues are didactic in character – the instruction of a father to his son, a husband to his wife, or a teacher to his pupil. In philosophical passages in which the dialogue form is absent, the mood is still that of an informal lecture to the reader. In spite of all the problems of interpretation of the Upanishads, it is possible to detect three philosophical tendencies in these works: a movement from plurality to unity, a movement from objectivity to subjectivity, and a movement from materialism to spiritualism.

The unifying tendency in Indian thought first manifested itself in pre-Upanishadic theological thinking in the pattern which Max Müller called *henotheism*. This denotes the habit of conferring on a chosen god, during the act of worship, attributes which belonged to other gods; in other words, the worshipper assumed, while worshipping one god, that this god was the only god and that the other gods were manifestations of the chosen one. Thus, while praying to Indra, the worshipper would assume Indra to be the only god, later Agni might be so honored. This behavior, which strikes the modern student as fickleness, may also be regarded as evidence of an early dissatisfaction with a pluralistic view of the nature of the world. The thinkers of the Upanishads were not content to remain at the henotheistic stage – the half-way house between polytheism and monotheism. An interesting study of the movement from plurality to unity is the reported discussion between Śākalya and Yājñavalkya.[1] "How many gods are there?", asks Śākalya. "Three thousand three hundred and six", replies Yājñavalkya. But upon further questioning, he confesses there are only thirty-three, then six, then three, then two, then one and a half, and at last he says there is but one god – all the others are the powers of the one.

But the Indian quest for unity did not stop with monotheism. The belief in one god is quite compatible with, and is often accompanied by, a metaphysical dualism of god and nature. The Indians argued that there must be a basic unity behind god and

[1] *Bṛihad-Āraṇyaka Upanishad,* 3. 9, 1.

the world. One of the early attempts to discover that unity is presented in the Upanishads as a dialogue between a father and his son.[2] The son, Śvetaketu, has returned to his home after twelve years of study of the Vedas. He is "conceited, thinking himself learned, proud". Uddālaka, the father, motivated partly perhaps by a desire to prick the inflated ego of his son, asks if he has learned "that teaching whereby what has not been heard of becomes heard of, what has not been thought of becomes thought of, what has not been understood becomes understood?" Śvetaketu does not understand the question until his father explains that what he has in mind is that just as all clay things are clay, all copper things are copper, and all iron things are iron, so all things of whatever substance are one thing. The son says that the *gurus* with whom he has studied did not know this. Would Uddālaka kindly instruct him? The father agrees. In the beginning, he says, there was just one Being, "one only, without a second". For some undisclosed reason this Being longed to be many, and out of this longing the world of plurality came to be.[3] The first three products from the One's proliferation were the elements: fire, water, and earth. The One entered the three elements as *Ātman* or living Self. All the manifold objects of the world, including man, came from these elements. This One is the root, abode, and support of all creatures. In the experiences of sleeping and dying a person regains the unity with that One which existed prior to the formation of plurality.

The father concludes his teaching about the unity which hides behind the plurality of the world by using eight analogues of this unity. Each analogue is concluded with the words, "Now that which is the subtle essence – in all that exists has its self. That is the True. That is the Self. That thou art (*tat tvam asi*), Śvetaketu." These eight illustrations are of sufficient importance in increasing understanding of the basic unity to merit brief presentations. (1) Although the individual in the state of sleep reaches the unity

2 *Chāndogya Upanishad*, 6.

3 A reason for the formation of plurality is given in *Bṛihad-Āraṇyaka Upanishad* 1. 4. 3; the One had no delight – "Oneself is like a half-fragment" – so he fell into two pieces, and thus arose husband and wife!

of True Being, he cannot know the fact of this unity in this state any more than the nectars from many trees which have been made into honey know that they have attained unity in the honey. (2) We have all come from Pure Being, but we do not know it, even as the waters of the ocean do not know from whence they came. (3) The *Ātman* is our true being. The body dies when the *Ātman* leaves, but the *Ātman* does not die. The illustration is that of a tree which dies when its vital principle has gone but not when a branch is removed. (4) The *Ātman* is small – it does not disclose itself – it is like the heart of the seed of a fig. (5) Yet the *Ātman* pervades all reality as salt will permeate the water into which it is put. (6) The truth about the *Ātman* can be obtained only with the help of a teacher as a blind man can find his way only by means of a guide. (7) and (8) Only the enlightened person is released from the bonds of plurality; such a person will not return to this earth to experience birth and death; he will remain in the great unity of True Being. He is reality. He is *Ātman*. "That thou art, Śvetaketu."

Paralleling the movement from plurality to unity in the historical period of the formation of the Upanishads was another movement, the movement from objectivity to subjectivity. In the famous Creation Hymn of the *Rig Veda* is the first reference to a Being (*sat*) which lies back of the world and gods. This unity came to be called *Brahman* from the root *brah*, which means *to expand*. *Brahman* was first conceived to be the objective reality which is expressed in the world of external nature. During the Upanishadic age the conception of the nature of *Brahman* shifted from the essence of objective reality to the essence of subjective reality until the individual person could say "I am *Brahman*". The first presentation of this view is in a discussion between a learned Brahmin named Gārgya and a second caste man named Ajātaśatru.[4] Gārgya came to Ajātaśatru the king of Benares and offered to give instruction about *Brahman*. Ajātaśatru replied that such instruction was most welcome, but after the Brahmin started his speech, the King's enthusiasm soon cooled, for the Brahmin had no new information. *Brahman* was described as the sun, the moon,

4 *Bṛihad-Āraṇyaka Upanishad*, 2. 1.

lightning, space, wind, fire, water, the image in a mirror, sound, the dawn, shadow, and the body. But to each identification Ajātaśatru objected that he was not being told anything he did not already know, and when at last Gārgya fell silent, Ajātaśatru asked, "Is that all?". Upon being assured that this was all Gārgya could teach, Ajātaśatru said that *Brahman* could not be known with such information and that, if the learned Brahmin would not object, he, a member of the second class, would endeavor to instruct a Brahmin about the Ultimate Reality. He led the Brahmin to a sleeping man and, after awakening him, turned to the Brahmin and asked, "Where was this man when he slept, and from whence has he come back upon waking?". The Brahmin did not know, so Ajātaśatru pointed out that while the man was asleep his voice, eye, ear, breath, and mind were restrained. In the state of sleep all the worlds were his. "As the spider moves along the thread it produces, or as from a fire tiny sparks fly in all directions, even so from this Ātman come forth all organs, all worlds, all gods, all beings. Its secret name (Upanishad) is 'the Truth of truth'."[5] In other words, *Brahman*, the unconditioned *Brahman*, is within; *Brahman* is the inner core of the subject. The *Brahman* which Gārgya described was the limited *Brahman*, the *Brahman* with attributes; the *Brahman* described by Ajātaśatru is the unlimited *Brahman*, the *Brahman* without attributes. It is this higher conception of *Brahman* which the Upanishads strive to present, and the *upanishad*, or secret meaning, is that the real *Brahman* and the real Self are identical.

Another dialogue which carries a similar message is recorded in the *Chāndogya Upanishad*.[6] Five rich and learned men have met and discussed their views about the nature of the Universal Soul (*vaiśvānara ātman*), but they are in such disagreement that

[5] *Bṛihad-Āraṇyaka Upanishad,* 2. 1. 20. Nikhilananda translation. Three translations of the Upanishads have been consulted in this study: Robert Ernest Hume, *The Thirteen Principal Upanishads* (London, Oxford University Press, 1954); S. Radhakrishnan, *The Principal Upanishads* (London, George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1953); Swami Nikhilananda, *The Upanishads* (London, Phoenix House Ltd., Vol. I, 1951; Vol. II, 1954; Vol. III, 1957; Vol. IV, 1959).

[6] 5. 11-18.

they decide they must seek an authority on this subject. They go to Uddālaka Āruṇi, a man with a reputation for wisdom. Uddālaka does not wish to reveal his own limited understanding of the subject and advises that they go with him to see Aśvapati-Kaikeya. The situation is a bit awkward, for the five householders happen to be Brahmins and Aśvapati is a member of the second caste. The author of this section of the Upanishad felt the necessity of supporting Aśvapati's claim to wisdom, and did so by mentioning that "He was a man who, on rising, could say, 'Within my realm there is no thief, no miser, nor a drinking man, none altarless, none ignorant, no man unchaste, no wife unchaste'."[7] The Brahmins come the next morning carrying fuel for the Kshatriyas' fire – a symbol of discipleship – and the instruction begins. Aśvapati follows the typical *guru* technique by asking each of the Brahmins to state what he regards the Universal Soul to be. The answers given show that each thought the Universal Soul was some external physical object: heaven, the sun, wind, space, water, and earth. The *guru's* response to each pupil is that since his information is so far from the correct one, how fortunate he is to have come to the right place for instruction! "Your head would have fallen off, if you had not come unto me"; "Your breath would have departed, if you had not come unto me"; "You would have become blind, if you had not come unto me"; etc.

After collecting all that his pupils know, the teacher instructs them beyond their limited knowledge. Their difficulty, he says, is that they have been thinking of the Universal Soul as something separate from themselves, whereas if they really knew this Soul they would not think of heaven, the sun, wind, space, water, and the earth as things outside themselves. For him wo knows the Universal *Ātman*, heaven is his head, earth his feet, wind his breath, etc. The Universal Self is identical with the individual self.

[7] *Chāndogya Upanishad,* 5. 11. 5. Hume. Note that this is a typical Indian way of proving one is wise, *i.e.*, by showing that one has the ability to put ideas into practice. This is another instance of the great difference between the Greeks and the Indians in their understanding of philosophy. Philosophy for the Greeks was the intellectual response one made to the challenge of wonder; philosophy for the Indians is the way of life which results from the grasping of the tragedy inherent in all life.

The knower of this truth, the teacher adds, "eats food in all worlds, in all beings, and in all selves". The Universal Self, the *Ātman*, is the self in all beings. To measure the objectively real is to measure the subjectively real; to grasp the full nature of the inner reality is to grasp the full nature of the objective reality. The macrocosm is not a remote unknown substance; it is the microcosm, the active inner self, the knower of the known, the subject in the knowing context.

The third movement reflected in the Upanishads is that from materialism to spiritualism. A materialistic philosophy of some sort has appeared among all peoples. India is no exception to this generalization, but Indians have been more effective than most people in wiping out all traces of the original works which support this view of the nature of reality. There are today no remaining systematic works on materialism in the vast philosophical literature of India. Obviously there was at some time a great burning of books. The Sanskrit words to denote this philosophical position are *Cārvāka* (pleasant word) or *Lokāyata* (the view of the common people). According to what can be constructed from the references to the Cārvāka philosophers, they taught that sensation is the source of all knowledge, that matter is the only reality, and that pleasure is the only value worthy of pursuit. The period of the greatest activity of the Cārvāka philosophers can be only conjectured. At least we know from references to them by the Buddhists that they were active in the sixth and fifth centuries B.C.

An interesting section of the *Chāndogya Upanishad* traces the developing conception of the nature of the self from the least satisfactory conception, that is, the materialistic conception, through two higher conceptions. The stage for this play is a split-level one, reminiscent of the book of Job. The characters are the gods, the devils, and a mythological personification of the creative force here called *Prajāpati*. The play opens with the prologue in which Prajāpati speaks: "The Self (*Ātman*), which is free from evil, ageless, deathless, sorrowless, hungerless, thirstless, whose desire is the Real, whose conception is the Real – He should be searched out, Him one should desire to understand. He obtains all worlds and all desires who has found out and who understands that Self."[8] Both gods and devils appear in the first scene on their separate stages, and both groups decide to search out this Self. Indra is delegated from the gods and Virocana from the devils to go to Prajāpati, fuel in hand, to learn from him the nature of the self. The two live as students of sacred literature for thirty-two years. At the end of this time they indicate their desire to learn the nature of the Self, the understanding of which will enable one to obtain all worlds and all desires. Prajāpati advises them to look at their reflections in a pan of water. Then he requests them to put on fine clothes and ornaments and to look again. This is the Self, he says. And with tranquil hearts Indra and Virocana begin their return journeys to the gods and to the devils to report their findings. The devils rejoice in the discovery that the body is the self, and that with the embellishment of the body goes the improvement of the soul. He who makes his body happy on earth will obtain all worlds and all satisfactions. Before Indra reaches the abode of the gods, he realizes that the identification of body and soul cannot be the truth he is seeking; for just as one could improve his soul by dressing his body well, so one could maim and destroy his soul with the maiming and destruction of the body. This could not be the soul which Prajāpati lauded in the prologue. So Indra returns to Prajāpati for further instruction. Again after thirty-two years of life in study Indra puts his problem to Prajāpati. This time the instruction is: "He who moves about happy in a dream – he is the Self." And again before reaching the gods Indra's satisfaction with the instruction ends, for he realizes that although the self that is active in dreams is free from the sufferings to which the body is subject, yet within the experience of the dream there is pain, suffering, and sorrow. It may be dream-suffering, but from within the dream it is very real. Without reporting this partial truth about the Self to the gods, India returns to Prajāpati for another thirty-two years. At the end of this period of student life Indra is informed "Now, when one is sound asleep, composed, serene, and knows no dream – that is the Self." Alas, before reaching the gods, Indra knows that Prajāpati has again not given to him the knowledge of the real Self, since the self in

[8] *Chāndogya Upanishad,* 8. 7. 1. Hume.

dreamless sleep cannot be aware of itself, it cannot think "I am he", it is as one who is destroyed. He returns to express his dissatisfaction and is asked this time to remain but five more years. At the end of the five years Prajāpati informs Indra that the Self he seeks transcends the selves he has learned about thus far. There is a bodily self which enjoys physical pleasures and suffers physical pains. This is the only self that some ever recognize. There are also selves which experience the experiences of dreaming and of dreamless sleep; and by further introspection one may be guided to the highest Self, the pure spirit, the subject of knowing which is continuous, above waking and sleeping. It is the Self however which experiences through the instruments of body, and dream, and dreamless sleep. It is the ground of all that is in the world.

This charming play may be interpreted as an experience of the Indian seers during the years 800 to 300 B.C. as they moved from a materialistic interpretation of man and nature to a spiritualistic interpretation. Indra made the transformation in one hundred and one years. A human naturally would take longer! The play reveals the conceptions through which man moves in his grasp of reality. It also calls attention to the fact that each individual man, if he attains spiritual outlook in life at all, attains it not by a sudden leap into the realm of spirit but by progressing through the levels of decreasing materialism.

Tracing these three movements in the Upanishads – the movement from plurality to unity, the movement from objectivity to subjectivity, and the movement from materialism to spiritualism – adumbrates how the Indians lost their gods. The Upanishadic seers were in quest of a reality beyond the apparent reality given to them by their undependable sense organs. They sought reality with a passionate devotion similar to the devotion with which the Hebrew prophets sought moral purity and the Greek philosophers sought knowledge. A prayer still used among the Hindus clearly reveals this quest:

> "From the unreal lead me to the real!
> From darkness lead me to light!
> From death lead me to immortality!"[9]

[9] *Bṛihad-Āraṇyaka Upanishad*, 1. 3. 28. Hume.

It was not enough that they might *know* the real, that is, formulate intellectual categories to represent the real as fully as possible; they would *be* the real, that is, identify themselves with the real so that they could experience it from within. A discursive knowledge which looks at the object from a position outside the object was not the sort of knowledge they wished. They would enter into the object. Thus to experience reality would be to experience their own inner being. They sought a reality quite different from the reality of the Vedic gods – personalized symbols of the powers of external nature. These gods were as objectively real as the sun, the moon, rain, clouds, lightning, thunder, fire, and intoxicating drink. They were realities to be known from without; not experiences to be felt from within.

Brahman, as already noted, is the name the seers gave to this "one without a second", this one that holds in its embrace all that is and all that will be, this reality behind all that appears as real. *Brahman* has no indicative marks, no qualities, no attributes. It is the First Cause and Final Goal, the Alpha and Omega. It is designated by the word *OM* – a word formed by uniting O the "first sound" with M the "last sound". It is inexpressible and unknowable. If one says he knows *Brahman*, his very words betray his ignorance, for that which is the substratum of all experience cannot be the object of experience. *Brahman* is the Eternal Subject. Even this is inadequate, since to be a subject an entity must have an object of its perception or knowledge, and there is nothing outside *Brahman* to become the object of the experience of *Brahman*. The seers concluded that "*Neti, neti*" ("Not this, not this", or "Inadequate, inadequate") must be the evaluation of all predications of *Brahman*. Negation and silence are the only techniques for explaining *Brahman*. To try to know the knower is like trying to see the eye that sees. The silver screen in a modern cinema makes the pictures visible without itself being visible; so *Brahman* makes all experience of reality possible without manifesting itself. In the Upanishads, when the thought is cosmological, the search for the real is either a movement backwards to a one from which all reality comes, or a movement upwards to a reality under which all reality is subsumed logically as universal to particulars, onto-

logically as reality to appearances, and teleologically as end to means; when the thought is psychological, the movement is inwards to a reality at the core of the self of man. The goal of the external quest is called the *Brahman*; the goal of the internal quest is called the *Ātman.*

The forest philosophers in their speculations bequeathed to us in the form of the Upanishads arrived at new views of the nature of the self. One of their primary innovations was that the self is dual. In the *Rig Veda* is a poem whose interpretation is not clear in the context in which it is found: "Two birds associated together, and mutual friends, take refuge in the same tree: one of them eats the sweet fig; the other, abstaining from food, merely looks on." [10] Sāyana explained that the two birds were the vital spirit and the supreme spirit. While it is not clear that this is the meaning in the *Rig Veda*, it is obvious that the duality of the self is what is intended in the *Muṇḍaka Upanishad* [11] and the *Śvetāśvatara Upanishad*,[12] where the poem again appears. The tree is the human body. The bird that eats the fruit is the self that enters fully into the experience of physical life; it participates in eating, drinking, waking, sleeping, breeding, suffering, and dying. It enjoys the fruits of the life of the body. The bird that does not eat the fruit but merely watches the activity of the first bird is the second Self which accompanies the first. The second refrains from any entanglement in bodily pursuits. It only contemplates the life of physical activity. The second Self does not censure the first for its enjoyment of the life of the body, but when the first self compares its own helplessness with the greatness of the second Self, it grieves and turns from its life of sorrow and bondage.

The duality of the self comes through in a straightforward manner in other parts of the Upanishads: "Two there are who dwell within the body, in the *buddhi*, the supreme *ākāsha* of the heart enjoying the sure rewards of their own actions." [13] In the *Aitareya*

[10] *Rig Veda,* I. 22. 8. 20.
[11] 3. 1. 1.
[12] 4. 6.
[13] *Kaṭha Upanishad,* 1. 3. 1. Nikhilananda. *Buddhi* is the intellect associated with the heart. *Ākāsha* is the pure space within the heart.

Upanishad one reads: "Who is this one? We worship him as the self. Which one is the self? He by whom one sees, or by whom one hears, or by whom one smells odours, or by whom one articulates speech or by whom one discriminates the sweet and the unsweet?" [14] Is the self – the real Self – the self of our sense organs, the self one denotes when one says, "I see, or I hear, or I smell, or I speak?". In the second verse of this chapter the seer says that the real Self is the consciousness which may appear as perception, conception, intuition, feeling, and will. The third verse informs us that the real Self is *Brahman.* It becomes obvious that the notion of self in the *Rig Veda* has undergone a change. Now there are a lower self and a higher Self, a self which lives in the bodily activities, and a Self which transcends these activities. The two selves are closely related and seem to be harmonious while associated with the body; yet there is a tension between the two – a tension which is felt by the lower self when confronted by the being of the higher Self.

The tension between the selves grows out of the fact that the lower self is so closely related to the body that "Whatever body he takes to himself, with that he becomes connected".[15] The lower self regards itself as male or female, stout or thin, slow or quick, according to the body which it enjoys. It distinguishes itself not only from the higher Self but also from all other lower selves. It brings difference to all it touches. The lower self, or the *jīva*, is the door of the deeds which start chains of action which must be carried out to their fruition. The principle of cause and effect, according to the Upanishads, operates in both the physical and the moral areas. A spectator who knows little about the game of billiards might suppose that the uncanny way in which the balls hit each other is the result of amazing and unpredictable good luck; the expert billiard player knows that the movement of the balls is not a matter of luck. He knows where the balls will be in the course of their movement, and he is able to start the movement which will result in the desired hits. For him billiards is not a game of chance; it is a game of strict determinism. The person

[14] *Aitareya Upanishad,* 3. 1. 1. Radhakrishnan.
[15] *Śvetāśvatara Upanishad,* 5, 10. Hume.

who does not understand the operation of causality in the affairs of man may think that many of the things which happen during a lifetime are the result of good luck or bad luck. The seers of the Upanishads declare that luck does not enter at all into the fortunes of man. What happens in life happens by necessary and sufficient causes. One reason why the law of cause and effect is not obvious is that the embodied self which reaps the results of the deed may not be the same embodied self which did the deed; that is, the *jīva* is the same, but it has, since the doing of the deed, identified itself with another body. The law of the deed, called *karma,* does not hold that all that happens in one particular body is the result of events which happened in this same body. *Karma* implies reincarnation or *samsāra.*

The doctrine of reincarnation is stated in many ways in the Upanishads. One of the most picturesque presentations is the following: "As a heavily loaded cart goes creaking, just so this bodily self, mounted by the intelligent Self, goes groaning when one is breathing one's last. When he comes to weakness – whether he comes to weakness through old age or through disease – this person frees himself from these limbs just as a mango, or a fig, or a berry releases itself from its bond; and he hastens again, according to the entrance and place of origin, back to life."[16]

The self decribed thus far is the one represented by the bird which eats the fruit of the tree. The bird which watches and does not eat is the supreme Self, the Self which does not identify itself with the body. The *jīva* particularizes; the *Ātman* universalizes. The *jīva* seeks to continue enjoying the fruits of the body; the *Ātman* seeks to unite with the Basic Unity of existence. This conflict between pluralization and integration within the individual resembles the Platonic conception of the soul in Plato's well-known myth of the charioteer and his two horses.[17] The integrating characteristic of the *Ātman* is interestingly presented in the *Bṛihad-Āraṇyaka Upanishad* in a dialogue which Deussen once described as "one of the most remarkable passages in the

[16] *Bṛihad-Āraṇyaka Upanishad,* 4. 3. 35-36. Hume.

[17] The figure of the chariot is also found in the Upanishads – *Kaṭha Upanishad,* 1. 3. 3-9.

Upanishads".[18] A man named Vājñavalkya, wishing to renounce the life of a householder, calls his two wives to him to make a settlement with them. One wife is satisfied with the financial arrangements, but the other wife, Maitreyī, does not wish to release her husband from his responsibilities until he has instructed her in the path to immortality. She asks, "If now, sir, this whole earth filled with wealth were mine, would I be immortal thereby?"[19]. Vājñavalkya replies that there is no hope for immortality through wealth. Maitreyī says she is not satisfied with the possessions which he has given her; she seeks only the wealth of immortality. Vājñavalkya, delighted with his wife's concern for immortality, invites her to sit and he will explain to her the path that leads to immortality. The supreme Self or *Ātman,* he tells her, is the dearest thing in the world; everything else is to be valued only to the extent that it contributes to the *Ātman.* A husband, a wife, sons, wealth, caste, worlds, and gods are good only insofar as they are instrumental to the intrinsic good of the supreme self: "Lo, verily, not for love of all is all dear, but for love of the Soul all is dear."[20] If one loses the *Ātman,* he loses everything: "Everything has deserted him who knows everything in aught else than the Soul."[21] The Self, continues Vājñavalkya, is the integrating agency for all reality. The Self is to reality as the tongue is to taste, the nostrils to odors, the eye to sight, etc. In the course of this particular instruction, Vājñavalkya remarks that "After death there is no consciousness." Maitreyī, possessed as she is with the burning desire to know about immortality and its attainment, seizes upon this remark and asks for clarification. Maitreyī's confusion arises out of the fact that she has taken her husband's remarks to refer to the lower self, the self represented by the bird that eats the fruits of the tree. Her husband informs her that as long as one perceives or conceives from the point of view of the self that individualizes one experiences a duality of knower and known, but that after the death of the dualizing self and its body there is no awareness of

[18] *Bṛihad-Āraṇyaka Upanishad,* 2. 4. Paul Deussen, *The System of the Vedānta* (Chicago, The Open Court, 1912), p. 172.

[19] *Bṛihad-Āraṇyaka Upanishad,* 2. 4. 2. Hume.

[20] *Bṛihad-Āraṇyaka Upanishad,* 2. 4. 5. Hume.

[21] *Bṛihad-Āraṇyaka Upanishad,* 2. 4. 6. Hume.

subject and object, or of I and not-I. Consciousness as self-awareness distinguished from awareness of objects of the self is no more. "For where there is duality, as it were, there one sees another; there one smells another; there one hears another; there one speaks to another; there one thinks of another; there one understands another. Where, verily, everything has become just one's own self, then whereby and whom would one smell? then whereby and whom would one see? then whereby and whom would one hear? then whereby and to whom would one speak? then whereby and on whom would one think? then whereby and whom would one understand? Whereby would one understand him by whom one understands this All? Lo, whereby would one understand the understander?"[22] This completes the teaching. Vājñavalkya has taught Maitreyī that the path to immortality is in turning from the perspective of the lower self which becomes involved in the affairs of the body, which sees individuality rather than generality, and which imposes duality upon the mental and life processes; one must turn to the other Self until the particular consciousness is no more. Then one will become as a lump of salt cast into the water. As saltiness permeates all the water so the Self is seen to be in all Reality. To attain this is to attain immortality.

The *Ātman* is described in other parts of the Upanishads as the Self which assumes all forms: "This whole world is his food."[23] It is the warp upon which the woof of creatures are woven.[24] Again, "He is the Self which is free from evil, ageless, deathless, sorrowless, free from uncertainty, free from fetters, whose conception is the Real, whose desire is the Real. . . . He who is in the fire, and he who is here in the heart, and he who is yonder in the sun – he is one."[25] The lower self sees, hears, tastes, smells, feels, and thinks in a discursive fashion. But when the person turns back to the higher Self "then one becomes non-knowing of forms".[26] As he becomes one, people, that is, the unenlightened people, may

[22] *Bṛihad-Āraṇyaka Upanishad,* 2. 4. 14. Hume.
[23] *Maitri Upanishad,* 7. 7. Hume.
[24] *Maitri Upanishad,* 7. 7. *Bṛihad-Āraṇyaka Upanishad* 3. 6. and 3. 8.
[25] *Maitri Upanishad,* 7. 7. Hume.
[26] *Bṛihad-Āraṇyaka Upanishad,* 4. 4. 1. Hume.

remark that he does not see, nor smell, nor taste, nor speak, nor think. In other words, they believe he has lost his senses. The man who is moving toward enlightenment can expect to suffer at the hands of the common people. Plato also tells us that the man who goes out of the cave of illusion will be ridiculed by the cave dwellers upon his return: "Men would say of him that up he went and down he came without his eyes; and that is was better not even to think of ascending; and if any one tried to loose another and lead him up to the light, let them only catch the offender, and they would put him to death."[27]

According to the Upanishads the person who knows reality from the view of the lower self perceives only diversity in life and does not find immortality: "He gets death after death, who perceives here seeming diversity."[28] But he who has learned to know reality from the view of the supreme Self "becomes self-controlled, calm, withdrawn into himself, patient, and collected; he sees the Self in his own self (body); he sees all as the Self".[29] The *Ātman* is without beginning or end. The inner Self of man is able to identify itself with all reality, because it *is* all reality. In spite of the difficulties the modern Western reader may have with the ideas expressed, he can see that what is being presented is a monistic, metaphysical idealism. The duality of subject and object passes away when one learns to grasp the world from the view of the *Ātman*. The Self has been identified with the object of knowledge; the usual ways of knowing are inadequate. "Where, verily, everything has become just one's self, then whereby and whom would one understand? Whereby would one understand him by whom one understands this All? Lo, whereby would one understand the understander?"[30] The state of dreaming gives a person a foretaste of the actual state of unity which is the nature of the real world. "When one goes to sleep, he takes along the material of this all-containing world, himself tears it apart, himself builds

[27] *Republic,* 517A. Jowett translation.
[28] *Bṛihad-Āraṇyaka Upanishad,* 4. 4. 19, Hume. Also *Kaṭha Upanishad* 2. 1. 10. The expression "death after death" means incarnation after incarnation.
[29] *Bṛihad-Āraṇyaka Upanishad,* 4. 4. 23. Nikhilananda.
[30] *Bṛihad-Āraṇyaka Upanishad,* 2. 4. 14. Hume.

it up, and dreams by his own brightness, by his own light."[31] *Ātman* has now displaced the mysterious figure of Prajāpati as the creator of all that is: "In the beginning, Ātman, verily, one only, was here."[32] *Ātman* is that out of which all things have come and *Ātman* is the energizing agent which started the movement to the formation of all that is. *Ātman* is the substratum of reality. "All the worlds, like so many beads are established in the self."[33] The world of the *Ātman* is the world of its own creation; hence the *Ātman* can observe: "I, indeed, am below. I am above. I am to the west. I am to the east. I am to the south. I am to the north. I, indeed, am this whole world . . . Verily, he who sees this, who thinks this, who understands this, who has pleasure in the Soul, who has delight in the Soul, who has intercourse with the Soul, who has bliss in the Soul – he is autonomous; he has unlimited freedom in all worlds. But they who know otherwise than this are heteronomous; they have perishable worlds; in all worlds they have no freedom."[34]

The seers of the Upanishads were convinced of the supreme importance of knowing the dual nature of the self, and of realizing that only the universalizing Self is the true Self. Furthermore, they believed that only by knowledge could one experience the liberation from the false view of reality and the false attachments to the lesser values of life. Sometimes they stated their views in striking manner; for example, in one place it is stated that there are three worlds and three ways of attaining these worlds; the world of men is obtained by the birth of a son, *i.e.*, his life is continued in his son; the world of ancestral spirits is attained by sacrifices; and the world of gods is attained by knowledge.[35] The knowledge which leads to liberation, however, is not a knowledge which can be communicated by the ordinary means of instruction. "This self cannot be attained by instruction nor by intellectual power nor even through much hearing."[36]

31 *Bṛihad-Āraṇyaka Upanishad,* 4. 3. 9. Hume.
32 *Aitareya Upanishad,* 1. 1. 1. Hume.
33 *Subāla Upanishad,* 10. 1. Radhakrishnan.
34 *Chāndogya Upanishad,* 7. 25. 1, 2. Hume.
35 *Bṛihad-Āraṇyaka Upanishad,* 1. 5. 16.
36 *Muṇḍaka Upanishad,* 3. 2. 3. Radhakrishnan.

The fact that some were instructed and exposed to the true picture of the nature of the Self and yet did not understand prompted some of the seers to conclude that the knowledge of the *Ātman* was the result of grace: "He is to be attained by the one whom the self chooses. To such a one the self reveals his own nature."[37] The *Ātman* does not make itself easily known to man: "Ātman cannot be attained by speech, by the mind, or by the eye."[38] It hides itself from those who would approach it by any way other than the proper sort of knowing: "That Self hidden in all beings does not shine forth; but it is seen by subtle seers through their one-pointed and subtle intellects."[39] The *Ātman* is "the unseen Seer, the unheard Hearer, the unthought Thinker, the ununderstood Understander".[40] The knowledge that leads the seeker to know the *Ātman* is the meditative practice of self-knowledge which is unlike all other sorts of knowledge. The *Ātman* is not known as an object; it can only be experienced as the knower in the knowing process. The being which transcends knowing is the knower himself. "He who, dwelling in all things, yet is other than all things, whom all things do not know, whose body all things are, who controls all things from within – He is your Soul, the Inner Controler, the Immortal."[41] The thinkers of the Upanishads made the discovery that the unity which they sought could not be found in the outer world; it could not be found outside of and apart from the Self. The final unity could be found only in the Self. All reality begins and ends with the *Ātman*, but those who live and think at the level of the lower self, do not discover this unity; they find only plurality.

The Upanishadic seers followed two paths and reached two remarkably similar conclusions. One was the path of theology. In following this path they arrived at the conception of a Being which transcended the gods, a unity to which they gave the name of *Brahman*. The other path was the path of psychology, and by

37 *Muṇḍaka Upanishad,* 3. 2. 3. Radhakrishnan.
38 *Kaṭha Upanishad,* 2. 3. 12. Nikhilananda.
39 *Kaṭha Upanishad,* 1. 3. 12. Nikhilananda.
40 *Bṛihad-Āraṇyaka Upanishad,* 3. 7. 23. Hume.
41 *Bṛihad-Āraṇyaka Upanishad,* 3. 7. 15. Hume.

this path they reached a unity which they called *Ātman*. Now the problem arose: what is the relation between the *Brahman* and the *Ātman*? *Brahman* is described as the transcendent unity of the world; *Ātman* is the immanent unity. *Brahman* is the essence of all external reality; *Ātman* is the essence of all internal reality. *Ātman* is found within the lower self: "As oil in sesamum seeds, as butter in cream, as water in river beds, as fire in friction sticks, so is the Self seized in one's own soul if one looks for Him with truthfulness and austerity."[42] But the supreme Self is hidden within the lower self. Sesamum seeds must be pounded to obtain the oil; cream must be churned to make butter; and the higher Self must be sought with honest diligence and with ascetic practices. Those persons who have not discovered the Supreme Self within are described as "slayers of the Self".[43] The word here does not literally mean killers, since the Self cannot be killed.[44] The "slayers of the Self" are those who smother, stifle, suppress, neglect, and deny the Self.

One seer points out that as fire is different, depending upon the nature of the substance that is being burned, so the *Ātman* differs according to the object in which it is: "As the same non-dual fire, after it has entered the world, becomes different according to whatever it burns, so also the same non-dual Ātman, dwelling in all beings, becomes different according to whatever It enters."[45] Yet the *Ātman* is not limited by that in which it abides. It transcends the *jīva*. "It exists also without."[46]

The discovery of the true relation of the *Ātman* and the *Brahman* is the path of salvation – and the meaning of salvation. The knower of this truth is united with *Brahman*; he will not again suffer incarnation: "Just as the flowing rivers disappear in the ocean casting off name and shape, even so the knower, freed from name and shape, attains to the divine person, higher than the high";[47] "He who knows the Supreme Brahman verily becomes

[42] *Svetāśvatara Upanishad,* 1. 15. Radhakrishnan.
[43] *Iśā Upanishad,* 3. Hume.
[44] *Kaṭha Upanishad,* 1. 2. 18.
[45] *Kaṭha Upanishad,* 2. 2. 9. Nikhilananda.
[46] *Kaṭha Upanishad,* 2. 2. 9. Nikhilananda.
[47] *Muṇḍaka Upanishad,* 3. 2. 8. Radhakrishnan.

Brahman";[48] "And to this day, whoever in a like manner knows the self as 'I am Brahman', becomes all this universe."[49] To describe the psychological awareness of the unity of immanent reality and transcendent reality as a discovery is a serious mistake if this were to imply that this unity is in any sense an achievement. Meditation does not accomplish the unity. Rather meditation merely discloses to man the true nature of things. *Ātman* and *Brahman* do not *become* one. They have always been one; they are now one; they will always be one. This identity is an eternal fact which man's dull understanding may fail to grasp. In the meditative experience the intuition enters, and the individual realizes that "the light which shines above this heaven, above all the worlds, above everything, in the highest worlds not excelled by any other worlds, that is the same light which is within men".[50] Then the poet breaks forth into song: "All this is Brahman . . . . He is my Self within the heart, smaller than a grain of rice, smaller than a grain of barley, smaller than a mustard seed, smaller than a grain of millet; He is my Self within the heart, greater than the earth, greater than the mid-region, greater than heaven, greater than all these worlds."[51]

While the Upanishadic seers seem to have affirmed unequivocally that the two worldgrounds the *Ātman* and the *Brahman*, are identical, the clarification of that identity was a problem for all of the schools of Indian philosophy in the centuries following the formation of the Upanishads. Is this identity a case of absolute physical identity? *E.g.*, this desk is identical with this same desk. Or is it a case in which the same object is considered in different contexts? *E.g.*, Clement Attlee the Prime Minister from the Labor Party is identical with Clement Attlee the Prime Minister who was in power at the time of India's liberation from English rule. Or is it a case of the identity of the same object at different stages of its development? *E.g.*, F. D. Roosevelt the student at Groton in the late nineteenth century is identical with F. D. Roosevelt the

[48] *Muṇḍaka Upanishad,* 3. 2. 9. Nikhilananda.
[49] *Bṛihad-Āraṇyaka Upanishad,* 1. 4. 10, Nikhilananda.
[50] *Chāndogya Upanishad,* 3. 13. 7. Nikhilananda.
[51] *Chāndogya Upanishad,* 3. 14, 1-3. Nikhilananda.

President of the United States from 1933 to 1945. Or is it a case of the identity of two members of the same species? *E.g.*, Harry S. Truman *as a man* is identical with Herbert Hoover *as a man*. Or is it a case of the identity of part and whole? *E.g.*, a glass of water dipped from the Atlantic Ocean is identical with the water of the Atlantic Ocean. Or is it a case of the identity of appearance and reality? *E.g.*, a photograph is identical with the person of whom it is a photograph. Or, if none of these, in what sense is *Ātman* identical to *Brahman*? The problem is still puzzling Indian philosophers.[52]

The Upanishadic quest for unity, subjectivity, and spirituality ended in the conception of an immanent-transcendent Absolute which is non-plural, non-objective, and non-material. If one must have a positive characteristic of it, one can affirm, "It is". The revealed writings can carry one no farther. A *guru* may help. But the final enlightenment must be one's own. In the words of the Buddha, each must work out his own salvation. A man named Narada once came to a *guru* requesting instruction: "Venerable

[52] Not all Indian philosophers believe that the Upanishads clearly teach the identity of *Brahman* and the higher Self of man. Madhva (1197–1276) was one of the most striking opponents of the identity interpretation. He wrote, "And if it be said that . . . the similarity between the Lord and souls is the similarity, i.e., absolute identity which exists between the Lord and His manifestations, it is denied; for it (absolute identity) cannot be, just as it does not exist between Surya (the sun), etc. and their images." (*The Vedānta-Sūtras with the Commentary by Sri Madhwacharya*, translated by S. Subba Rau, Madras, Thomson and Co., 1904, III. 2. 18.) Madhva stated, "For it cannot be that the pure Lord merges into the Ātman bound down with qualities . . . it is impossible and against fact and reason that one and the same self could be in all the bodies at the same time." (Ibid., I. 1. 9; I. 2. 3.) R. Nagaraja Sarma argues that Madhva was one who refused to allow scriptural authority to destroy the conclusions of reason and experience: "It is clear that Madhva has done a distinct service to the philosophic world by emphasizing the fact that there is no use in the absolutistic endeavour to stifle thought by means of pressure from the scripture. . . . Sacred texts retain supremacy only in their special field of revealing the nature of the Brahman or the Supreme Overlord of the Cosmos. . . . Scriptural texts are capable of different interpretations, and if they are blatantly in contradiction with the verdicts of rational human experience, they have to be thrown overboard." (R. Nagaraja Sarma, *The Dwaita Vedānta of Madhva*, Madras, The National Press, 1931, pp. 37, 38, 48.)

Sir, I know the Rig-Veda, the Yajur-Veda, the Sāma-Veda, the Atharva-Veda as the fourth (Veda), the epics (Purānas) and ancient lore (Itakāsa) as the fifth, the Veda of the Vedas (*i.e.* grammar), the rules of the sacrifices by which the Manes are gratified, the science of numbers, the science of portents, the science of time, logic, ethics, etymology, Brahma-vidyā (*i.e.* the science of pronunciation, ceremonials, prosody, etc.), the science of elemental spirits, the science of weapons, astronomy, the science of serpents, and the fine arts. All this I know, venerable Sir. But, venerable Sir, with all this I know words only; I do not know the Self."[53] Self-knowledge is the key to the satisfaction of the hunger for ultimate reality. The promise of the Upanishads is that he who attains self-knowledge "crosses over sorrow . . . crosses over sins . . . becomes immortal".[54]

[53] *Chāndogya Upanishad*, 7. 1. 1-3. Nikhilananda.
[54] *Muṇḍaka Upanishad*, 3. 2. 9. Radhakrishnan.

IV. THE SELF IN SĀṄKHYA-YOGA

The sixth century B.C. is one of the most remarkable centuries in human history. It is the century of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Zoroaster, the Buddha, Mahavira, Confucius, and Lao Tzu. It is the century of Thales, Anaximander, and Anaximenes, who originated in the Greek world an approach to reality later to be called *philosophy*. And it is the century in which philosophy appeared in India. Many Indians and Indophiles will doubtlessly dispute this statement and will point to the Vedas and the Upanishads to support their claim for a much earlier date for the beginnings of philosophy in India; but these works cannot be considered as philosophy in the strictest sense, for they lack systematic presentation and rational argument, without which one may have religion or speculation, but not philosophy.

Das Gupta has said of the Vedas, "It is here we find interesting philosophical questions of a more or less cosmological character expressed in terms of poetry and imagination."[1] The same author says of the Upanishads, "These are not reasoned statements, but utterances of truths intuitively perceived or felt as unquestionably real and indubitable, and carrying great force, vigour, and persuasiveness with them."[2] The speculations in the Vedic literature were – and still are – a vast mine of material for Indian philosophers. The ancient Greek philosophers could draw some philosophical material from the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, but these epics cannot match the *Rig Veda* and the Upanishads in quality and

[1] Surendranath Das Gupta, *A History of Indian Philosophy*, Vol. 1 (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1957), p. 6.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 7.

quantity of religious and philosophical insights. This deficiency was not without merit. The Greeks, lacking a body of material assumed to be revealed, were not tempted to develop a Greek scholasticism; whereas one of the constant dangers in Indian philosophy has always been the stifling of original thought in the presence of authoritarian ideas. Greek philosophers did not write commentaries on the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*; Indian philosophers, on the other hand, had difficulty in thinking except in the context of the Upanishads. This fundamental difference between the two philosophies can be brought out by noting that the terms *orthodox* and *heterodox* are irrelevant in Greek philosophy, but in Indian philosophy these terms are used to classify philosophers and philosophies.

Philosophy in ancient Greek civilization came to be when a few Ionians, motivated by intellectual curiosity and courageously ignoring mythology, began to speculate freely about the natural causes of physical motion and the fundamental reality which they surmised must lie behind the manifold world of everyday experiences. This early Greek thought was philosophical, not merely speculative, because argument was an integral part of it. Philosophy in India did not originate as an effort to satisfy scientific interests; rather it arose out of the emotional necessity of protecting and defending a precious body of truths. The Buddhist revolt was part of the intellectual ferment in sixth century India which forced Indian minds to desert dogmatism and adopt reason as a method of arriving at truths and values. Appeals to the authority of Upanishadic seers were futile against those who rejected Vedas and Upanishads. Analysis had to be countered with better analysis, not with speculations; criticism with more penetrating criticism, not with revelations; system with system, not with intuitions; naturalistic and humanistic thought with logical examination, not with poetic rhapsody or mystical ecstasy. The Buddha may not have been the first Indian philosopher, but he is the earliest Indian thinker to be dated with accuracy who presented his message in a philosophical manner. His basic message, now called *The Four Noble Truths*, was presented as an inference from three postulates:

First Postulate:	All living beings suffer.
Second Postulate:	All suffering is caused by desires.
Third Postulate:	Whatever is caused can be stopped by removing the cause.
The Inference:	Therefore, suffering can be stopped by the elimination of desires.

The Buddha was one of many who challenged the scholastic method of discovering truth by searching in Vedic lore. Out of this challenge has grown Indian philosophy which was once described by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, the first Minister of Education in the Government of India, as "one of the proudest possessions of human civilization".[3]

The term *Indian philosophy* is used with three different meanings. The broadest use of the term is the one which would include all speculation in the sub-continent of India. According to this use, the *Rig Veda* and all the Upanishads are part of Indian philosophy. From what has been said above, it is clear that this is not the sense in which the term is being used in this study. The term can be used in a second sense to include all the systematic and rational schools of thought which have developed in India, regardless of their relationship to the Vedas and the Upanishads. This use would include both the *āstika* (orthodox) schools, which accept the Vedas and the Upanishads, and the *nāstika* (unorthodox) schools, which reject the Vedas and the Upanishads. The *nāstika* schools are Cārvāka or Lokāyata, Jainism, and Buddhism. The narrowest use of the term would limit its denotation to the orthodox schools. It is in this sense that the term is used in this study.

The *āstika* and the *nāstika* philosophies – with the exception of the Cārvāka – agree in three assumptions: (1) This world is a place of sorrow. (2) The soul is subject to transmigration. (3) The Vedic tradition contains some truths. Each philosopher interprets these assumptions in the context of his own philosophical position. The last assumption is especially varied in the systems; only the

[3] Radhakrishnan et al, *History of Philosophy, Eastern and Western*, Vol. 1 (London, Allen and Unwin, 1952), p. 5.

Cārvāka rejects the Upanishads completely and absolutely. A brief statement of how the self is conceived in each of the *nāstika* systems will be helpful in understanding the self in the *āstika* systems.

According to Cārvāka there is no spiritual substance. The physical body is the self. Life is one of the possible arrangements of matter, and consciousness is a by-product of physical activity.[4]

In Jainism all reality is divided into two categories: *jīva* (the vital principle) and *ajīva* (the non-vital principle). *Jīvas* are real individual substances having neither beginning nor end. Although *jīvas* are spiritual in nature, they have a physical dimension, but, unlike atoms, *jīvas* vary in size according to the size of the body the *jīva* inhabits. There are an infinite number of *jīvas*. They are all alike in that sentience is their essential nature, yet they differ by reason of the number of senses they have. Some *jīvas* have but one sense, *e.g.*, *jīvas* in stones, lumps of clay, salt, and chalk have but the sense of touch; other *jīvas* have as many as five senses, *e.g.*, human beings, lower animals, creatures of hell, and demi-gods. *Jīvas* upon becoming associated with the non-vital principle – a principle which is divided into time, space, motion, stability, and matter – suffer curtailment of powers. The aim of human life is to cast off all limitations so the *jīva* can gain omniscience. The means of salvation is the avoidance of destruction of *jīvas* and the release from dependance upon *ajīva*.[5]

Gautama the Buddha rebelled against metaphysical speculations. He formulated a list of unelucidated or unprofitable questions which he would not discuss because he believed that men

[4] For information on Cārvāka see: Dakshinaranjan Shastri, *A Short History of Indian Materialism, Sensationalism and Hedonism* (Calcutta, Calcutta Book Co., 1930); Dale Riepe, *The Naturalistic Tradition in Indian Thought* (Seattle, University of Washington Press, 1961), ch. 4.

[5] The following books on Jainism are recommended: J. Jaini, *Outlines of Jainism* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1916); Mohan Lal Mehta, *Outlines of Jaina Philosophy* (Bangalore, Jain Mission Society, 1954); Mrs. Sinclair T. Stevenson, *The Heart of Jainism* (London, Oxford University Press, 1915); Nathmal Tatia, *Studies in Jaina Philosophy* (Banares, Jain Cultural Research Society, 1951). *The Sacred Books of the Jainas*, edited by Sarat Chandra Ghoshal, is published by The Central Jaina Publishing House of Arrah and Lucknow.

who considered these questions became distracted from the chief problem of life, *viz.*, how to deal with suffering.[6] Among this list of questions was the problem of the nature of the soul in the incarnate and in the liberated states. In Buddhism the term *soul* or *self* (*ātman*) designates a composite or aggregation (*saṅghāta*) of five groups of fleeting, changing states (*skandhas*): body, feeling, perception, will, and consciousness. The *ātman* is but a case of rapid continuity, just as a lighted stick when whirled around produces the illusion of a circle of fire. Human life is an unbroken series of causes and effects without a spiritual substratum. Rebirth is a becoming without a transmigrating entity. The illusion of a permanent self is part of the human suffering which the Buddha came to alleviate.[7]

The *āstika* systems are usually regarded as six in number, although there is historical evidence for the existence of many more. The six are Nyāya, Vaiśeṣika, Sāṅkhya, Yoga, Mīmāṁsā, and Vedānta. In spite of obvious differences and apparent contradictions among the six systems the almost universal tendency of modern students of Indian philosophy is to emphasize the agreement of the systems. The following quotations are representative of the prevailing opinion of recent scholars on the six systems:

[6] See Troy Wilson Organ, "The Silence of the Buddha", *Philosophy: East and West,* Vol. 4, No. 2 (July, 1954), pp. 125-140.

[7] Among the vast literature on Buddhism the following works are recommended: Edward Conze, *Buddhism: Its Essence and Development* (Oxford, Bruno Cassier Ltd., 1951); Paul Dahlke, *Buddhism and its Place in the Mental Life of Mankind* (London, Macmillan and Co., 1927); Edmond Gore Alexander Holmes, *The Creed of Buddha* (New York, John Lane Co., 1908); Christmas Humphreys, *Buddhism* (Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, 1951); Arthur Berriedale Keith, *Buddhist Philosophy in India and Ceylon* (Oxford, The Clarendon Press, 1923); Louis de La Vallée-Poussin, *Le dogme et la philosophie du bouddhisme* (Paris, G. Beauchesne, 1930); T. R. V. Murti, *The Central Philosophy of Buddhism* (London, George Allen and Unwin, 1955); Hermann Oldenberg, *Buddha, His Life, His Doctrine, His Order,* translated by William Hoey (London, Williams and Norgate, 1882); Bhikshu Sangharakshita, *A Survey of Buddhism* (Bangalore, The Indian Institute of World Culture, 1957); Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki, *Outlines of Mahayana Buddhism* (London, Luzac and Co., 1907); Jünjiro Takakusu, *The Essentials of Buddhist Philosophy,* edited by Wing-tsit Chan and Charles A. Moore (Honolulu, University of Hawaii, 1947). *The Sacred Books of the Buddhists,* edited by T. W. Rhys Davids and I. B. Horner, is published by the Oxford University Press.

"agree on certain essentials";[8] "development, according to certain points of view and in varied directions . . . of a single doctrine";[9] "complementary projections of the one truth on various planes of consciousness, valid intuitions from differing points of view";[10] "a graduated interpretation of the Ultimate Reality, so interrelated that the hypothesis and method of each is dependent upon the other";[11] "so many stages on the road to truth";[12] "present an integrated development of thought";[13] "a kind of unity behind the variety of the various philosophical systems, each being regarded as a step towards the highest and final truth".[14]

Three of the six systems are concerned chiefly with metaphysics; these are Vaiśeṣika, Sāṅkhya, and Vedānta. The Nyāya deals with logic, the Yoga with practical psychology, and the Mīmāṁsā with ritual. Because of similarities of doctrine of certain pairs of schools, the six schools are commonly considered as three joint schools: Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, Sāṅkhya-Yoga, and Mīmāṁsā-Vedānta. This classification is especially appropriate for a study of the self. However, since the Mīmāṁsā has little to offer on the nature of the self, it will be omitted altogether in this study; whereas two of the sub-schools of the Vedānta are so divergent in points of view that each is worthy of a chapter. Thus, the Indian conception of the self in the classical schools of philosophy will be considered in four chapters: the Sāṅkhya-Yoga, the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, the Advaita Vedānta of Śaṅkara and the Viśiṣṭādvaita Vedānta of Rāmānuja. The order of treatment is the chronological order.

Sāṅkhya-Yoga is the joint system formed by uniting what is

[8] S. Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy,* Vol. 2 (London, Allen and Unwin, 1951, p. 24.

[9] René Guénon, *Man and His Becoming According to the Vedānta.* Translated by Charles Whitby (London, Rider and Co., 1945), p. 4.

[10] Heinrich Zimmer, *Philosophies of India* (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1952, p. 605.

[11] Theos Bernard, *Hindu Philosophy* (New York, The Philosophical Library, 1947), p. 5.

[12] M. U. Mishra, *History of Indian Philosophy,* Vol. 1 (Allahabad, Tirabhukti Publications, 1957), p. vii.

[13] N. V. Thadani, *The Secret of the Sacred Books of the Hindus* (Delhi, Bharati Research Institute, 1953), General Editor's Note.

[14] Max Müller, *The Six Systems of Indian Philosophy* (New York, Longmans, Green and Co., 1928), p. 601.

sometimes known as the Sāṅkhya of Patañjali with the Sāṅkhya of Kapila. Patañjali is an historical person, although the dates of his life cannot be fixed; Kapila is thought to have lived about the sixth century B.C., although many doubt that he is more than a legend. The word *sāṅkhya* means *knowledge acquired by reflection.* Kapila's Sāṅkhya is sometimes called Seśvara Sāṅkhya, that is, Sāṅkhya with Īśvara or god; whereas Patañjali's Sāṅkhya is called *Nirīśvara Sāṅkhya,* that is Sāṅkhya without Īśvara. The Kapila version and the Patañjali version may be variations of an earlier Sāṅkhya system, the oldest system of Indian philosophy. The philosophy of Kapila sets forth a metaphysical system in its cosmic outlines with the self as the subjective aspect of the universe. The philosophy of Patañjali directs attention to the human self within the universe and delineates for man the path of his liberation. Thus, Patañjali's system is Sāṅkhya metaphysics applied to the practical problem of salvation. The chief metaphysical difference between the two systems is that Kapila's philosophy, to be designated hereafter as Sāṅkhya, dispenses with the concept of deity, while Patañjali's philosophy, hereafter called Yoga, establishes the existence of a deity.

Within the Upanishads, as was noted in the preceding chapter, are a large number of texts which describe ultimate reality in monistic terms, but there are other texts which describe reality as made up of the elements of earth, fire, and water. While the *Ātman* and the fullness of external reality are often identified, the *Ātman* is also described as that which pervades a reality. This duality of identification might lead one to conclude that there are two entities: that which pervades and that which is pervaded – an ultimate psychic principle and an ultimate cosmic principle. This suggests the metaphysical dualism which is one of the characteristics of Sāṅkhya-Yoga. Hence, it appears that Sāṅkhya-Yoga ideas can be traced back to related and inferred ideas in the Upanishads, although only the rashest scholar would conjecture Sāṅkhya-Yoga is a direct development from the Upanishads. Keith says, "it is impossible to find in the Upanishads any real basis for the Sāṅkhya system. The Upanishads are essentially devoted to the discovery of an absolute, and, diverse as are the forms which the absolute may take, they do not abandon the search, nor do they allow that no such absolute exists".[15] Keith adds that the Sāṅkhya is a system built on the Upanishads, but that unlike the Vedānta of Śaṅkara, "it goes radically and essentially beyond the teachings of the Upanishads".[16] The conflict situations described in the Upanishads – such as that of eater and food, of the two birds in the same tree, or of the copulating couple who separate after union – may be interpreted as the seeds of the dualism of the Sāṅkhya-Yoga. Sāṅkhya-Yoga may be regarded as the philosophy which abandons the idea of the Absolute yet which keeps the ideas of spirit and matter, or perhaps as the philosophy in which the Absolute is broken into spirit and matter.

The difference between subject and object is fundamental in Sāṅkhya-Yoga. The distinction between perceiver and the perceived, between knower and the known, and between actor and the acted upon are distinctions found in all man's experiences. This elemental fact of human experiences caused the Sāṅkhya-Yoga philosophers to conclude that all reality springs from two separate and distinct realities which they called *prakṛti* (the object) and *puruṣa* (the subject). These are principles which lie beyond the given. Their reality is inferred only from experiences of things which could not have caused themselves. While these terms are commonly translated as *matter* (or *nature*) and *spirit*, these translations, or any translations, are misleading, for the concepts represented by these terms have never arisen in Western philosophy in precisely these forms. To compare *prakṛti* and *puruṣa* with Aristotle's matter and form, or with Descartes' matter and mind, would be misleading; to point out the genuine similarities between *prakṛti* and Plato's Receptacle, and between *puruṣa* and Aristotle's Unmoved Mover, might help at first, but the problems involved in trying to eliminate those aspects of the Receptable and the Unmoved Mover which are not applicable would soon wipe out the value of the comparison. It is a good rule of thumb in the study of any philosophy to understand it first in its own terminology and

[15] A. Berriedale Keith, *Sāṁkhya System* (Calcutta, YMCA Publishing House, 1949), p. 7.

[16] *Ibid.*, p. 8.

its own cultural context. Let comparisons be made – if they must be made – *after* the philosophy has been thoroughly studied in its own terms. Sāṅkhya-Yoga, then, is a dualistic philosophy, and the two realities are *prakṛti*, the principle of matter, and *puruṣa*, the principle of spirit.

Prakṛti is never directly experienced. It is established by reasoning upon man's common experiences of the external world; it is a reality conceived to exist in order to account for factors of human experience. Thus Īśvarakṛṣṇa states in the *Sāṅkhya-karika*, the earliest text on the Sāṅkhya philosophy, "The non-perception of that (*i.e.*, *prakṛti*) is due to its subtlety, not to its non-existence, since it is perceived in its effects."[17] The arguments rest on two metaphysical assumptions: that the world of man's experience is a real world, and that effects are identical with their material causes. So the argument becomes: the world of man's experience is a real world – a material world; this world is an effect of a real material cause; this real material first cause of the world is designated by the term *prakṛti*.

Prakṛti is the objective background of all experiences. It is the non-self component of all genuine experience. It is the material possibility of all things, the potentiality of all modifications, the noumenal aspect of the universe. If *prakṛti* is to be called *matter*, we must understand that it is undeveloped, unformed, non-intelligent, qualityless matter. *Prakṛti* was never created; it is beginningless since it has not come into being from anything else; it is called *avyakta* (unevolved), *Prakṛti* is single; there is only one *prakṛti*. But it is not simple. All that is in the physical universe has evolved from *prakṛti* by reason of a plurality within itself which by imbalance brings forth evolutes. *Prakṛti* is composed of three mutually dependent entities which, according to the reasoning of Sāṅkhya-Yoga philosophers, are the basic characteristics essential to a physical universe. These component elements of *prakṛti* are not qualities, since each acts as a single entity, not as an attribute of something else; they are not substances, since each is dependent upon the others for expression of its essential activity. These component elements are called *guṇas*. The word *guṇa*

[17] *Karika*, VIII. Ganganatha Jha translation.

means *rope*, symbolizing the fact that the three are strands which in their activity form *prakṛti*. Each *guṇa* is distinct in its characteristics, yet each *guṇa* is dependent upon the other *guṇas* for its own being. No *guṇa* can stand by itself. A *guṇa* acquires its "*guṇaship*" only in relation to the other *guṇas*. The activity of *prakṛti* is specifically the activity of the *guṇas*. The entire world comes to be as a result of tension among the *guṇas*. This tension does not imply antagonism, for the *guṇas* act in harmonious opposition. The physical world is the result of a cosmic counterpoint, a polyphonic composition with three melodies. As long as the *guṇas* are in a state of equilibrium, nothing happens; *prakṛti* remains in the state of *avyakta* – and there is no world. The *guṇas* are the constituents through whose activity undeveloped matter evolves, thus bringing into being a physical universe. The three *guṇas* are *sattva, rajas,* and *tamas*. *Sattva* is the principle of consciousness; it is light and luminous, and brings pleasure to the individual. *Rajas* is the principle of action; it is stimulating and impelling, and brings pain to the individual. *Tamas* is the principle of restraint; it is heavy and inactive, and produces the state of indifference. Perhaps a clearer understanding of what the Sāṅkhya-Yoga philosophers were attempting to say can be achieved by noting that any movement can be analyzed into an end to be realized, a push to originate the movement, and a medium which offers restraint without which movement would not be. For example, a man swimming across a river must be aware of the opposite shore as the end he is seeking; he must move his arms and legs to propel himself through the water; and the water as medium must offer resistance or he could not pull and kick himself through the water. Again the *guṇas* can be compared to water which is a pleasure to the thirsty, a curse to the drowning, and an object of indifference to the sleeping. The *guṇas* are thought of as the ultimate causes of pleasure, pain, and indifference which are the effects produced by objects in different people or in the same person at different times.

According to Sāṅkhya-Yoga the world with all its diversity comes into existence from the pluralification of a single entity rather than from the combinations of many minute particles. The equilibrium of the *guṇas* is disturbed, and the diverse objects of

the physical world appear as evolutes of *prakṛti*. The *guṇas* do not act upon each other, but in the reproduction of themselves form compounds with varying proportions of *sattva, rajas,* and *tamas*. Intellect is the first emergent from *prakṛti*. It is the highest form of matter. In intellect *sattva* is dominant; *rajas* and *tamas* are suppressed. Intellect has both a cosmic aspect called *mahat* (the great) and a counterpart in the individual which is called *buddhi* (cognition). Intellect is physical, having evolved from *prakṛti* and hence must not be confused with the spiritual nature of *puruṣa*. It may be regarded as the material substratum of all mental activities. It mirrors the image of *puruṣa* in itself, and, being completely unaware of this act, mistakes the image for its own self. Thus arises the evolute of *ahaṁkāra* (self-awareness, or self-consciousness) – the awareness of the pseudo-self, not the *puruṣa* or real self. In *ahaṁkāra rajas* is predominant. Again there is a cosmic aspect and an individual aspect, although Sāṅkhya-Yoga seems more concerned about the psychological aspects of this evolute. In the context of Sāṅkhya-Yoga philosophy the *ahaṁkāra* is the devil, *i.e.*, the deceiver, for it is through the agency of *ahaṁkāra* that the *puruṣa* is falsely identified with *prakṛti*.

Two groups of things emerge from *ahaṁkāra*: one group emerges with the *sattva* aspect predominant; the other group emerges with the *tamas* aspect predominant. But, in these evolutes, as in all evolutes, all three *guṇas* are present, since neither in *prakṛti*, nor in any of the evolutes of *prakṛti*, can a *guṇa* exist by itself. From the *sattva* aspect of individuation appears *manas* or mind as the arranger of sensations into percepts, the sensory organs of sight, hearing, touch, taste, and odor, and the motor organs of speech, handling, walking, evacuation, and reproduction. From the *tamas* aspect of *ahaṁkāra* emerges the subtle elements, that is, the principles in things which make possible the sensations of light, sound, touch, taste, and odor. From these subtle elements evolve the gross elements: space, air, fire, water, and earth: According to Sāṅkhya-Yoga space comes to be from the objectivity in things which causes sound; air from both that which causes sound and from that which causes touch; fire from sound, touch, and color; water from sound, touch, color, and taste; and earth from sound, touch, color, taste, and odor.

The evolution which has been traced thus far is known as the primary evolution. This evolution is marked by the appearance of new principles of reality. It is an evolution which cannot be reversed. Secondary evolution is the evolution of the common things of the world such as rivers, mountains, plants and animals. In secondary evolution no new principles appear and the course of evolution in this case can be reversed, that is, a plant may return into the gross elements out of which it has evolved. The Sāṅkhya-Yoga philosophers, like most other Indian philosophers, also speak of great cycles (*kalpas*) of cosmic evolution in which the evolutes of primary evolution dissolve at last into a uniform state of the *guṇas* – only to be started once again on another cycle with the disturbance of the equilibrium of the *guṇas*.

Sāṅkhya-Yoga accounts for a complete act of thought within the evolutes of *prakṛti*; there are sense organs to be excited in the presence of the objects; there is a mind to arrange sense-impressions into percepts; there is a self-awareness to relate the percept to a self; and there is an intellect to form the concept. The view of reality and knowledge which has been outlined thus far seems so complete that one might wonder why the Sāṅkhya-Yoga philosophers added a second reality. What is needed beyond that already noted which caused these philosophers to reject monism? The seventeenth *karika* states five arguments for *puruṣa*: "The Purusha exists (1) from the character of being-meant-for-other of the collocations, (2) from (this other having to be) the opposite of the three *guṇas* and so on, (3) from (the necessity of there being) a controller (for the collocations), (4) from (the necessity of there being) an enjoyer (for these collocations), and (5) from (the fact of the existense of) an activity for the purpose of aloneness (freedom or release)." [18] The chief argument for *prakṛti* is a cosmological argument – an argument for a material first cause; the first argument for *puruṣa* is a teleological argument – an argument for a spiritual final cause. Design is noted in all the evolutionary

[18] This literal English version is offered by D. D. Vadekar in "The Sāṁkhya Arguments for the Purusha" in *Selected Papers of The Indian Philosophical Congress* (1959), p. 37.

activities of *prakṛti*, and wherever there is design, there is an end transcendent to the object towards which the activities point. This "pointing" must not be interpreted as purposive behavior since *prakṛti* is not capable of acting with consciousness. According to the *Sāṅkhya-Karika* the end-seeking behavior of *prakṛti* is analogous to the milk of the cow which appears for the nourishment of the calf: "As the insentient milk flows out for the growth of the calf, so does Nature act towards the emancipation of the spirit." [19] The second argument contends that the *prakṛti* requires that which is opposite to its own nature, since (as the first argument states) *prakṛti* is meant for *puruṣa*, and this relation certainly is not possible if they are the same object. So the complex *prakṛti* must be countered by a simple reality which will be the opposite of the three *guṇas*. Of course, *puruṣa* cannot be the opposite of *each* of the three *guṇas*, since the *guṇas* are "opposite" to each other! But the *puruṣa* must be opposite to the *threeness* of the *guṇas*. The third argument is a very bad argument from the point of view of the Sāṅkhya philosophy, since it argues from the evidence of design in *prakṛti* to the necessity of a controller of the activities of *prakṛti*. This is inconsistent from the Sāṅkhya point of view, since the Sāṅkhya philosophers hold that *puruṣa* does not control *prakṛti*. On the other hand, as an argument within the context of the Yoga philosophy, this argument is perfectly valid, since Yoga philosophers argue for the existence of a god. The argument is that "non-purposive purpose" is a contradiction, and that the only satisfactory explanation for the purposive behavior of *prakṛti* is that a god directs the entire movement of *prakṛti*. The fourth argument for *puruṣa* is an argument for an "enjoyer", that is, a witness, of the activities of *prakṛti*. This argument is built on the demand that all experiences conform to the subject-object pattern. All experiencing includes an object, a subject, and the activity of knowing, so the reality of a subject can be inferred from the existence of an experienced object. *Prakṛti* exists as an experienced object, hence the reality of subject can be inferred. But, once again, this gives to *puruṣa* activities which the Sāṅkhya philosophers can allow and which the Yoga philosophers cannot allow.

[19] *Karika,* LVII. S. S. Suryanarayana Sastri translation.

The fifth argument is based on man's longing for release from material bondage. The existence of this innate human longing implies a pure spiritual reality which is the object of man's quest.

Puruṣa cannot be known, for *puruṣa* is subject and never object – the knower, but not the known. The existence of *puruṣa* is established as a necessary condition for the phenomenal manifestations of the physical world, but it is not in the world of objects. It is pure consciousness. It is not a *thing* that possesses the attribute of consciousness. It is a principle which transcends *prakṛti*. It is the subjectivity behind all objectivity; the unrelated, unqualified, unchanging consciousness; it is the self. *Puruṣa* does not do anything; it is completely inactive. It is a witness detached from all activity. It is not evolved from anything else, and nothing evolves from it. As transcendental self it is completely detached from nature. "It is the self-centered, self-satisfied light, which never seeks any other end and never leaves itself." [20] The *puruṣa* is the one unchanging reality in the midst of all the changes in the universe. According to Sāṅkhya-Yoga *puruṣa* is not one, but many. "The plurality of spirits certainly follows from the distributive nature of the incident of birth and death and of the endowment of the instruments of cognition and action, from bodies engaging in action, all at the same time, and also from differences in the proportion of the three constituents." [21] If there were but one *puruṣa*, then how account for differences in birth, death, caste, temperament, mental faculties, physical aptitudes, and varying amounts of the *guṇas* in individual lives? Unfortunately, this insistence on the plurality of *puruṣas* is not harmonious with the claim that there is no difference among the *puruṣas*. If *puruṣas* do not differ from each other, then on what grounds can it be said that there are many *puruṣas*? Sāṅkhya-Yoga creates two serious problems for itself: (1) How distinguish the *puruṣas*, and (2) how relate *puruṣas* and *prakṛti*? The unconvincing nature of the answers offered by the Sāṅkhya-Yoga philosophers prepared the way for the Advaita Vedānta with its claim that if the Sāṅkhya-Yoga

[20] Surendranath Das Gupta, *Yoga as Philosophy and Religion* (London, Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, 1929), p. 20.
[21] *Sāṇkhya-Karika,* XIX. Sastri translation.

philosophers had followed out the implications of their claims that the self is pure consciousness, that selves have no specific determination in themselves and that selves are the only immutable realities, they would have arrived at the conclusion that there is but one self and the physical world is an illusion. For example, Shrikhande has written, "The Sāṅkhya philosopher has rendered invaluable service to the cause of truth by determining the exact nature of the self but he is afraid to draw all the conclusions that follow from his discovery. He continues to believe in an endless number of individual selves all existing independently of one another. But if each self is pure consciousness distinguished from all objects, it is impossible to say what can distinguish one self from another." [22]

Prakṛti and *puruṣa* stand in impressive polarity to each other. *Prakṛti* is a single complex reality; *puruṣa* is an infinity of simples. Sāṅkhya-Yoga becomes a metaphysical dualism; one real is a cluster of spiritual entities, the other is material monism – spiritual atomism and material absolutism! *Puruṣa*, this multitude of simple selves, and *prakṛti*, this single composite unintelligent reality, must be in harmony. But how? The *Sāṅkhya-Karika* says they act together like an able-bodied blind man and a crippled man with good sight who join forces: "For the perception of Nature by the spirit and for the isolation of spirit, there is a union of both, – like that of the halt and the blind; and from this union proceeds evolution." [23] The analogy is inadequate, since *puruṣa* does not act upon *prakṛti*. Furthermore, *prakṛti* is unintelligence and hence cannot be aware of *puruṣa*. *Puruṣa* cannot act on *prakṛti*, and *prakṛti* cannot be aware of *puruṣa*, yet the Sāṅkhya-Yoga insists on an effectual relationship. Soul influences matter, yet without acting; and matter is influenced, yet without consciousness! To express the relation as one in which matter "is infatuated at the sight of her beloved but her beloved is absolutely indifferent" [24] is poetic but incorrect, since it implies that nature can be conscious of the

[22] V. B. Shrikhande, "The Nature of the Self" in *Papers of The Indian Philosophical Congress* (1925), p. 114.
[23] *Karika*, XXI. Jha translation.
[24] S. K. Chattopadhyaya, "In Defence of Sāṇkhya Dualism" in *Papers of The Indian Philosophical Congress* (1959), p. 31.

presence of spirit. All that can be affirmed is that *prakṛti* is excited by the presence of *puruṣa*, although no more aware of *prakṛti* than iron filings are aware of the magnet which determines their movements. *Puruṣa* just by being itself disturbs the equilibrium of the *guṇas* and initiates the action which is a potentiality of the guṇas. *Prakṛti* acts to realize the purpose of *puruṣa* which is the freeing of *puruṣa* from imagined dependence upon *prakṛti*. When this ignorance of the real nature of *puruṣa* which results in the identification of the self with the evolutes of nature has been fully eliminated, *prakṛti* will have fulfilled its reason for existence and will withdraw, leaving only *puruṣa*. *Prakṛti* exists for her own annihilation. Sāṅkhya-Yoga dualism begins to look surprisingly like monism! As Hiriyanna says, "while the system professes to be dualistic, its implication is quite the reverse". [25]

The self described thus far is the *puruṣa*, the transcendent or true self. The empirical self is the self which is compounded of *prakṛti* and *puruṣa*. It is the divided self of the immediate experience of each person. It may be thought of as a unity of *buddhi*, the psychological aspect of the first evolute of *prakṛti* and of *puruṣa*. Each *puruṣa* has a *buddhi* connected with it. The self which is associated with all mental and physical activities is due to the reflection of *puruṣa* in *buddhi*. The unchanging characteristic of *puruṣa* makes it unrecognizable; yet it is the constant factor in all knowing. *Sattva guṇa* is most akin to *puruṣa*, and this is the *guṇa* which predominates in *buddhi*. In the empirical self the non-sentient *buddhi* becomes sentient and the passive *puruṣa* becomes active. Sāṅkhya-Yoga, like all the systems of Indian philosophy other than materialism, believes in transmigration, but that which migrates from incarnation to incarnation according to this philosophy is not the *puruṣa* nor even the empirical self. The incarnated reality is the *liṅga* (subtle-body) which consists of *buddhi, ahaṁkāra, manas*, sense organs, motor organs, and subtle elements. Death and re-birth mean only the changing of one gross body for another one.

Liberation in Sāṅkhya-Yoga is disunion or freedom from mat-

[25] M. Hiriyanna, *Outlines of Indian Philosophy* (London, Allen and Unwin, 1932), p. 287.

ter. Self-realization is the elimination of *prakṛti*. Even within an incarnation the individual may reach the enlightened stage in which his activities are no longer directed to the preservation of the empirical self, but to the interests of *puruṣa* alone. Some individuals live at a level of life in which *rajas* or *tamas* are in control; others live so that *sattva* predominates; still others are in the state in which even *sattva* is transcended. At the physical death of those who have attained the third level of life, the *puruṣa* and the purged *buddhi* with which it is associated attain the final liberation from all *prakṛti*. For such an individual there will be no more incarnations. This possibility according to the Sāṅkhya-Yoga philosophers is open to all regardless of sex or caste.[26]

Patañjali introduced a number of new features into the Sāṅkhya-Yoga philosophy. The most significant metaphysical change is the addition of the concept of God to the scheme of things. God is a *puruṣa* like the other *puruṣas* except that he is not subject to the law of *karma* – the causal law operating in human fortunes whereby each event in the life of a person is regarded as both the effect of causes originating either in the present incarnation or in previous incarnations and as the cause of effects which will be manifested either in the present incarnation or in future incarnations. "Īśvara is a distinct *puruṣa*, untouched by the vehicles of affliction, and fruition."[27] God is conceived as a personal controller and director of the entire evolutionary process of *prakṛti*. God is not a creator, since for Yoga as for Sāṅkhya *prakṛti* and *puruṣa* are both beginningless. Some students of this system believe that Patañjali introduced the conception of a personal god in order to make the Sāṅkhya-Yoga system more palatable by eliminating the atheism of Sāṅkhya.[28] This oft mentioned atheism of Kapila's Sāṅkhya is not a hostile rejection of any idea of God; rather it is an affirmation that no proofs for the existence of God are convincing. The *Sāṁkhya-Pravacana Sūtra*, a fourteenth century Sāṅkhya work, states, "On account of the non-existence of evidence, there is no proof of an eternal Īśvara."[29] Sāṅkhya's "atheism" turns out to be agnosticism; Sāṅkhya does not deny the existence of a god and it does not affirm the non-existence of a god, but it does hold that the existence of a god cannot be established. The Sāṅkhya philosophers were not as interested in denying god as they were in trying to do without the conception of god.

The chief concern of Patañjali is the development of concrete practical techniques for the liberation of the individual human selves or *puruṣas* from the meshes of *prakṛti*. His philosophy is called the Yoga system because of the emphasis he places on the way of liberation rather than on metaphysics. His system might be called practical psychology rather than metaphysics. The word *yoga* is from a root which means *to join* and is related to the English word *yoke*. Yoga is conceived in four ways in India. Yoga is sometimes considered to be a way of acquiring occult powers. This form is usually frowned upon by religious and philosophical leaders in India, although unfortunately this is the only yoga about which most Westerners have heard. The yoga of Kṛṣṇa in the latter part of the *Bhagavad-Gītā* is the second type of yoga: a joining of the devotee to his chosen deity through the instrumentality of love. The yoga of Sāṅkara proceeds by means of intellection to the awareness of the union of the essential being of man with the Brahman. The fourth type of yoga is that of Patañjali in which there is an exercise of the will of the individual until all that is non-self is drawn away from the self. By energetic use of mental disciplines and exercises in concentration the soul is set free from nature. The yoga of love and the yoga of thought are yogas of union; Patañjali's philosophy is one that denies that philosophy can bring salvation. It is by will, not by love or thought, that the end is achieved. Patañjali describes his yoga as *citta vrithi nirodha* (restraining the whirlpool mind). It is a technique for producing "one-pointed mindedness" so the self stands as pure consciousness no longer falsely identified with the evolutes of *prakṛti*. He seeks to achieve freedom from the conditioning which *prakṛti* has placed upon *puruṣa*. A *puruṣa* which attains this state of liberation is said

[26] *Mahābhārata*, XIV. 19. 61.
[27] *The Yoga Sūtras of Patañjali*, Sūtra 24. Rama Prasada translation.
[28] Richard Garbe, *The Philosophy of Ancient India* (Chicago, The Open Court Publishing Co., 1897), p. 15. Also article by Garbe on "Yoga" in *Hastings Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. 12, p. 831.

[29] V. 10. Nandalal Sinha translation.

to be in the state of *kaivalya* (independence). This word is "really only another name for divinity, for material things are in bondage, unable to move of themselves, but always moved by forces from the outside; the divine is free, able to move of itself, and to act upon other beings and things".[30] The *citta* – Yoga term for the empirical self which includes the *buddhi, ahaṁkāra*, and *manas* of Sāṅkhya – is to be purified by the suppression of *rajas* and *tamas* until it is as free from *prakṛti* as is *puruṣa*. Then *puruṣa*, the true self, at last severed from all *prakṛti* – even from *citta* – will shine forth like the sun when the clouds pass. The liberated *puruṣa* then enters into the life of absolute independence and freedom from all that caused incarnations and its attendant sufferings.

The *Yoga Sūtras* of Patañjali are divided into four chapters. The first chapter contains the theory of yoga, the second chapter contains the techniques, the third discusses the powers which can be developed through the techniques, and the fourth describes the liberation which is accomplished. In chapter two before listing the parts of the yoga technique Patañjali presents five afflictions or handicaps (*kleshas*) which must be overcome before the exercises themselves can be practiced. These are ignorance, egoism, liking, disliking, and clinging to life. Ignorance is the wrong notion about objective things, such as taking the non-eternal for the eternal, the impure for the pure, the painful for the pleasurable, and the not-self for the self. Patañjali says that ignorance is the field or breeding ground for the others, by which he means that ignorance brings the other impedimenta to salvation along with it, and hence that the best way to attack the root cause of man's suffering is to get rid of ignorance. This ignorance is not merely incorrect thinking, which can be cured by substituting true information for false information; it is a deviation of the will, which can be righted only by strenuous effort. If ignorance is wrong identification about things external, egoism is wrong identification in the realm of things internal. It is identifying the self with the vehicles through which the self functions – the identification of *puruṣa* with *citta*. Liking or attachment is the weakness of men which appears in

[30] Ernest Wood, *The Occult Training of the Hindus* (Madras, Ganesh and Co., 1931), p. 17.

their thirst for pleasure. Disliking or aversion is the inverse of liking; it is the rejection of things which appear to be painful. Patañjali believes that both good and evil often come disguised. Clinging to life is fear of physical death and love of life, which expresses itself in acts of self-preservation with no regard for the quality of the life that is preserved. Yoga *per se* can begin after an attack has been made on these afflictions. The attempt to deal with the afflictions is called "preliminary yoga".

The remainder of chapter two of the *Yoga Sūtras* is devoted to the eight parts or limbs (*aṅgas*) of the yoga discipline. These are eight stages through which the seeker progresses on his way to ultimate liberation from the clutches of nature. The first five exercises are means of restraining the mind by physical devices. The first demands that the yogi be obedient to the moral law: he is not to kill, lie, steal, have sexual intercourse, nor have possessions. The second limb requires obedience to the spiritual law: he must be pure in mind and body, be content, practice ascetism, study sacred books, and be devoted to God. These two parts are designed to overcome the egoistic tendencies of man. Patañjali suggests that if an individual has difficulty in any of these subdivisions of the first two exercises, he should not attempt to fight by frontal attack; instead he should attempt to substitute a good attitude with an evil one, for example, if he is moved to hatred toward a person, let him direct his mind to considering the good characteristics of this person. The third stage is concerned with posture. No particular posture is necessary, other than that it be one that is easy and one that can be held steadily. Since the time of Patañjali yogis have worked out a number of preferred postures. Regulation of breath is the fourth limb. Through the years the Indian yogis have perfected a wide variety of forms of breathing. Most of these are built on the general principle of deep steady breathing with the time of exhalation prolonged beyond that of the time of inhalation. Step five is abstraction, a state in which the senses do not come into contact with their objects, a blocking of the senses from their customary mirroring of the objective world. At the end of the fifth stage the yogi has progressed through ethical preparation, body-control, breath-control, and

sense-control. Now he is ready for the three exercises designed to produce mind-control.

The last three stages are called concentration, contemplation, and meditative trance. The group name for the three is *saṁyama* (inner discipline). This is a state in which the body is still, but the mind is engaged in a state of great activity. "That which appears to be the stillness of *Samādhi* is perhaps the highest activity possible. Even what is called one-pointedness is itself a state of upmost activity. When the mind is one-pointed it does not mean that one idea is indelibly impressed on the mind like an engraving on a stone, but that the mind is working so quickly that the image of one is formed in no time as it were, destroyed in no time as it were, and formed again."[31] Insofar as one can distinguish these three stages at all, one can say that concentration means holding the mind steadily in a particular physical spot, contemplation means having an unbroken current of thought on one abstract idea, and the meditative trance means that state in which the hiatus between knower and known has been bridged. At last the knower knows the known, because he is the known. Thinker and object of thought are the same. This state is not one which every person can obtain, nor is it one which is likely to be held for long periods of time; but for those who have attained to it, it is the supreme moment, since for them the *guṇas* are inoperative. They have found the way to absolute freedom.

[31] Shrisha Chandra Vasu in *Patañjali's Yoga Sūtras with the Commentary of Vyasa and the Gloss of Vachaspati Mishra. The Sacred Books of the Hindus,* Vol. 4 (Allahabad, The Panini Office, 1910), p. ix.

V. THE SELF IN NYĀYA-VAIŚEṢIKA

Philosophers can be classified into two types, the analytic and the synthetic. Analytic philosophers are chiefly concerned with the examination of ideas for clarity, consistency, and meaningfulness; synthetic philosophers seek comprehensiveness, fruitfulness, and integration. Analysts disinfect ideas to destroy the false, the confused, and the meaningless; synthesists bring ideas together into creative wholes.

The Nyāya philosophers were analytic. They sought to determine the conditions of correct thinking and the means for acquiring dependable knowledge about the world. The word *Nyāya* means an argument by which one is led to a conclusion. Although right reasoning was from the first the chief concern of the Nyāya philosophers, they never lost sight of the fact that they philosophized to liberate man from the suffering which all Indian philosophers believed to be inherent in human life. The first sentence of the *Nyāya Sūtras* of Gotama, the founder of the Nyāya philosophy, states that logic is pursued because of its utility in fostering "supreme felicity". The Nyāya and the Vaiśeṣika are regarded as sister schools of philosophy. Vaiśeṣika might be described as the theory of reality which gives completeness to the Nyāya theory of knowledge. Since the tenth century the two have been formally linked. The joining of the two reflects the Indian belief that both analysis and system are needed. System without analysis is blind; analysis without system is empty. To put this wisdom in a mythological context: when Śiva dances, he both destroys and creates.

Nyāya was not received with immediate favor by the orthodox philosophers because the system relied entirely upon reasoning;

but later when the Nyāya logicians found room for revelations from the Vedas, even Brahmins accepted the principles of Nyāya. The logic of this system became the fundamental method of philosophical research and the technique for the defense and explication of philosophical doctrines. Thus Nyāya became assimilated into the other systems and gave to Indian systems a compactness of argument seldom found in Western systems of philosophy.

According to the Nyāya philosophy knowledge is the manifestation of objects. Knowledge reveals objects. Knowing alters objects no more than a flashlight alters the objects upon which its beam of light is cast. When the manifestation agrees with the nature of the object, the knowledge is said to be true. The test of the truth of knowledge is the application of the knowledge. True knowledge leads to successful activity; false knowledge leads to failure. There are four dependable ways of acquiring knowledge: perception, inference, analogy, and verbal testimony. The organs of perception are the five external senses and one internal sense, the mind (*manas*), which perceives qualities such as cognition, desire, aversion, volition, pain, and pleasure. "Perception is that knowledge which arises from the contact of a sense with its object."[1] This contact is an actual material contact; sight, hearing, and smell are assumed to be as much in contact with their objects as are taste and touch. Perceptual errors are due to the presence of conditions which cause the object to be associated with characteristics is does not actually have. Inference – the Sanskrit word for inference means *after knowledge* – is a form of knowing which follows some other knowledge, that is, inference is a process by which one passes from some possessed knowledge to new knowledge by means of a medium shared by the two items of knowledge. This, of course, is none other than the familiar syllogism of Western thought, although the Indian syllosgism, unlike the Aristotelian syllogism, puts the conclusion of the syllogism first, for example, "There is fire on that hill, because there is smoke, and whatever

[1] *The Nyāya Sūtras of Gotama,* translated by S. C. Vidyabhusana. *Sacred Books of the Hindus,* Vol. 8 (Allahabad, The Panini Office, 1930), I. 1. 4. All quotations from the *Nyāya Sūtras* in this chapter are from the Vidyabhusana translation.

smokes is on fire", rather than "Whatever smokes is on fire; the hill is smoking; hence the hill is on fire." The Indian arrangement of the syllogism has the merit of pointing out that the syllogism is an instrument of proof rather than an instrument of discovery. Another difference between the Nyāya syllogism and the syllogism as it is usually treated in the West is that the mental operations in the Nyāya syllogism include both deduction and induction, for, in the words of the *Nyāya Sūtras*, inference is "knowledge which is preceded by perception".[2] Analogy or comparison is "the knowledge of a thing through its similarity to another thing previously well known".[3] No other school of Indian philosophy asserts comparison as a separate way of knowing. Verbal testimony is "the instructive assertion of a reliable person".[4] There are two kinds of testimony: the scriptural testimony which is infallible by its nature, and the secular testimony which may or may not be true.

The Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika philosophy assumes that the objects which are manifested by means of perception, inference, analogy, and testimony exist independently of the knowing relationship. Also it holds that these real objects are knowable. In this system to say that something is unknowable is to deny that it exists. On object may be unknown, but it cannot both be and be unknowable. Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika is an unqualified realism. The objects of experience also exist independently of each other; in other words, Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika has a pluralistic view of the world. The things of experience are classified differently by the Nyāya philosophers and by the Vaiśeṣika philosophers. According to the Vaiśeṣika philosophers there are seven categories of reality: substance, quality, action, generality, particularity, inherence, and non-existence. The Naiyāyikas identify sixteen categories: means of right knowledge, object of right knowledge, doubt, purpose, familiar instance, established tenet, members of a syllogism, confutation, ascertainment, discussion, wrangling, cavil, fallacy, quibble, futility, and occasion for rebuke. A comparison of these two classifications shows that Vaiśeṣika is concerned with things as such, whereas

[2] *Nyāya Sūtras,* I. 1. 5.
[3] *Nyāya Sūtras,* I. 1. 6.
[4] *Nyāya Sūtras,* I. 1. 7.

Nyāya is concerned with how things are known. The early Nyāya philosophers were convinced of the importance and the danger in knowing; logic and the art of controversy, rather than metaphysics, were their chief interests. A complete system of philosophy was attained only when the two systems were joined.

The most important metaphysical category of the joint system is the category of substance (*dravya*). There are nine substances: earth, water, fire, air, ether, time, space, self (*ātman*), and mind (*manas*). Some of the substances are material, some non-material, so this system cannot be described as either materialistic or idealistic. No substance can be derived from another substance. Each substance is ultimate. The first four of the substances – the familiar four elements of the Greek world – exist as atoms. Atoms are the ultimate particles of matter and have neither beginning nor ending. While the atoms cannot be perceived, their existence is inferred from the conviction that the divisibility of material objects cannot continue interminably. The atom is the limit of material division. In keeping with the general pluralism of the system, the atoms are qualitatively distinct. This means that earthy things possess only earth atoms, watery things possess only water atoms, etc.

The self (*ātman*) is a substance among substances, but unlike earth, water, fire, and air, is non-material and non-atomic. The attributes of the self are according to Nyāya philosophers "desire, aversion, volition, pleasure, pain, and intelligence",[5] and according to the Vaiśeṣika philosophers "intelligence, pleasure, pain, desire, aversion, effort, virtue, vice, tendency, number, dimension, separateness, conjunction, and disjunction".[6] The self is spiritual because of three potentialities it has which it shares with no other substance: cognition, desire, and volition. These three are fleeting attributes which subsist only in relationship to objects. They are meaningless without such a reference. This means that although the self in itself is non-knowing, non-desiring, and non-willing, it has the possibility of knowing, desiring, and willing. These three

[5] *Nyāya Sūtras,* I. 1. 9.

[6] *The Padārthadharmasaṁgraha of Praśastapāda,* translated by Ganganatha (Allahabad, E. J. Lazarus and Co., 1916) V. 44.

attributes considered together constitute consciousness. Hence, the self may be said to be essentially unconscious, yet it possesses the power of becoming conscious when in relation to the body. Consciousness is an accidental feature and not an essential attribute of the self's existence. The Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika philosophers seem to have regarded the denial of consciousness as a central element in their conception of the nature of the self, yet this in the minds of many students of the system is the least satisfactory part of the theory, for it is not at all clear how a substance can be called spiritual in which consciousness is found only as an adventitious quality.

One evidence for the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika claim that the self can exist without consciousness is the experience of sleeping without dreaming. In dreamless sleep the self exists, yet it is not knowing, nor desiring, nor willing. Another argument that the self is a substance which can exist without consciousness is based on the conviction that the self can be liberated. The liberated self is devoid of any consciousness of the world, and hence of any volition to modify the world or one's self in the world. If consciousness were an essential attribute of the self, argue the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika philosophers, the self could not exist in the state of liberation. Therefore, those who make consciousness a necessary element in the reality of selves are in fact guilty of denying that the self as self can be saved from the miseries of life, since the only salvation from misery under these conditions would be the annihilation of the self. The defenders of consciousness as an essential attribute of the self turn out to be guilty of the heresy of Buddhism, that is, they imply that extinction of the self rather than realization of the self is man's salvation.

There are two classes of selves according to this system of philosophy: *Jīvātman* (individual self) and *Paramātman* (the Supreme Self). There are an infinite number of individual selves. One argument for the plurality of selves begins with the observation that there are many bodies. The experience of one body is not the same as the experience of another body, that is, one man's enjoyment is not the same as a second man's enjoyment, or the first would feel the second's enjoyment in the same degree of intensity

with which he feels his own. Therefore, there is a distinct perceiver, a distinct self, in each of the many bodies. Kaṇāda, the founder of Vaiśeṣika, in the *Vaiśeṣika Sūtras* says that "plurality of souls is proved by status".[7] In the commentary on this *sūtra* Śaṅkara Miśra says, "Status means several conditions, as one is rich, another miserable, one is happy, another unhappy, one is of high, another of low birth, one is learned, another ignorant. These circumstances being impossible without a diversity of souls, prove a diversity of souls." In the next *sūtra* Kaṇāda offers another proof: "Plurality of souls follows also from the authority of significance of the Shastras."[8] This appeal to the Vedic writings prompted Jayanārāyaṇa to add as a gloss the following interesting interpretation of the well-known passage which identifies the individual soul and Brahman: "It cannot be asked, 'What then will be the fate of these texts, *viz.* "Thou art That, O Śvetaketu!" "One who knows Brahman, verily becomes Brahman", etc.' For the text, 'Thou art That', conveys the sense of identity in this sense that what is devoted to, or belongs to, That, is not different from That. The text, 'One who knows Brahman, verily becomes Brahman', does not convey the sense of identity, but that of similarity of the *Jīva* (*i.e.*, the embodied Soul), to Īśvara (*i.e.*, the Great Soul), in point of freedom from suffering, etc.; for, otherwise, the text, 'The stainless one attains to supreme similarity', can have no meaning. In popular language also there is the tropical use of identity in the sense of resemblance, as when there is an abundance of wealth, it is said, 'This priest has become a king', and so on. Nor should it be maintained that identity is produced in the state of salvation, or the cessation of ignorance or false knowledge, since difference, being eternal, is incapable of destruction, and even if we admit the destruction of difference, then there is necessity for the existence of two individuals." In other words, the individual souls are eternally different from the Supreme Soul.

The conception of a Supreme Soul or God is not clearly presented in the *Nyāya Sūtras* and the *Vaiśeṣika Sūtras*. Probably neither Kaṇāda nor Gotama believed in a God, but later philosophers of the joint-school allowed a God. The arguments for the existence of God were based on three needs of the system: (1) a cause to account for the appearance of the world as an effect; (2) a law-giver to explain the order which is found in the natural world, and (3) a judge to administer rewards and punishments in terms of a moral world. God is conceived as a distinct soul. Like the individual soul, God is eternal, but in addition he possesses the attributes of omniscience and omnipotence and is in no way entangled in the cycle of existence which holds other souls. God is the creator, preserver, and destroyer of the world, but he is not the savior of men, nor is he a being into which the individual souls are absorbed.

Individual selves are uncreated, and, since they are simple (*i.e.*, without parts), they cannot be destroyed. Hence, each self is eternal. It is not limited by space or time. Selves are also omnipresent, yet, since the thoughts, emotions, and volitions of the self are confined to the body, the self may be said to be where it acts. Each self has one mind (*manas*). The mind is an instrument of consciousness; it is – as noted above – the internal sense organ and is as passive as the five external senses. *Manas* does, however, have a higher status in that it is a necessary condition of all awareness. This necessity is evidenced in the common experience of seeing or hearing without awareness of what is in the range of one's vision or hearing. *Manas* is the instrument of apprehension which links the self and the senses. Through the *manas* and the senses the self is related to the material world. The *manas* is not only the instrument by which apprehension is made possible, but also it is the principal cause of the bondage of the self to the body. The self confuses its true nature with the *manas*, and mistakenly regards itself as the *manas*. The self associated with *manas* is subject to sorrow and gladness, pain and pleasure; the self in itself is devoid of all these psychic features. As long as the false view of the self which identifies self and *manas* is entertained, incarnation will follow incarnation.

Evidences for reincarnation are given in the *Nyāya Sūtras*.

[7] *The Vaiśeṣika Sūtras of Kaṇāda,* translated by Nandalal Sinha. *Sacred Books of the Hindus,* Vol. 6 (Allahabad, The Panini Office, 1923), III. 2. 20. All quotations from the *Vaiśeṣika Sūtras* in this chapter are from the Sinha translation.

[8] *Vaiśeṣika Sūtras,* III. 2. 21.

These evidences arise from acts of the very young which are interpreted as memories of a previous life, *e.g.*, "The soul is to be admitted on account of joy, fear, and grief arising in a child from memory of things previously experienced." [9] "A child's desire for milk in this life is caused by the practice of his having drunk it in the previous life." [10] Memory is an attribute of the soul only when the soul is associated with *manas*, that is, when the soul exists in a body. The liberated soul has no memory and no psychic activities of any sort.

This is the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika conception of the self: a non-material substance lacking consciousness, intelligence, memory, and awareness, and having no organic relationships with other selves, with senses, with *manas*, with the physical world, nor with God. In their thinking about the self the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika philosophers carefully eschewed the dangers of unanalytic speculation. They purged the Upanishadic conception of the self of many of its problematic aspects, but in the process they may have destroyed some of the valuable insights of the Vedic seers. Hiriyanna closes his description of the Nyāya-Vaiśesika conception of the self with this evaluation: "Compared with the Upanishadic conception of the self, this is a very poor one; and, when we remember that knowledge or experience here is neither the essence nor a constant feature of the self, but that it only appears when certain external factors – none of which is spiritual – co-operate, it will be seen that the system is not far removed from materialism." [11]

The contributions of the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika philosophers in arguments for the existence of a self are more impressive than their speculations on the nature of the self. This is just what would be expected of analytic philosophers. There is no visible mark of the existence of the self, Kaṇāda remarks,[12] therefore the self cannot be established by external perception. However, the self can be established by internal perception. The self is known directly as the subject of an experience. The experiences of pain, pleasure,

[9] *Nyāya Sūtras,* III. 1. 19.
[10] *Nyāya Sūtras,* III. 1. 22.
[11] M. Hiriyanna, *The Essentials of Indian Philosophy* (London, Allen and Unwin, 1949), pp. 91-92.
[12] *Vaiśeṣika Sūtras,* III. 2. 6.

desire, aversion, and effort lead to the inference of something to which these experiences belong. These experiences are recognized as being co-existent with the notion of the self. Thus one does not say "Pain exists" or "Pleasure exists", but "I am pained" or "I am pleased". There is an *I* which is characterized now by pain, now by pleasure, and at other times by desire or aversion, or effort. It is not the body alone that is the *I*, for *I* is never used by one person in referring to the body of another person. And the *I* cannot be said to refer to one's own body alone, for the *I* denotes a common subject, not a material product. *I* refers to something internal. This internal something which is called the "self" is inferred from marks or indications. "Desire, aversion, volition, pleasure, pain, and intelligence are the marks of the soul." [13] "The ascending life-breath, the descending life-breath, the closing of the eye-lids, the opening of the eye-lids, life, the movement of the mind, and the affections of the other senses, and also pleasure, pain, desire, aversion, and volition are marks of the existence of the self." [14] These marks lead one to infer the existence of a self in man, since without a permanent substance these experiences would be impossible, for they require a continuous and identical something in order to be. One knowns one's own self directly, *e.g.*, "I am pleased" implies self-awareness as well as an awareness of pleasure. But one can know the self of another person only indirectly, *e.g.*, when one hears another say "I am pleased", one can infer that the other's words "I am pleased" mean that he is self-aware also, but when one refers to the pleasure of another, he does not say "I am pleased". *He* in this case refers to the self of the other person which can only be inferred from the words of the other person plus the assumption that the other is even as one is in one's self. In either case, whether it is one's own self or the self of another that is being established, the self is never known by itself, but always as the subject of which something is predicated.

Another proof of the reality of the self is the proof of verbal testimony of the scriptures. "Therefore the self is proved by reve-

[13] *Nyāya Sūtras,* I. 1. 10.
[14] *Vaiśeṣika Sūtras,* III. 2. 4.

lation."[15] However, Kaṇāda was not favorably impressed by the appeal to scriptural testimony, for he at once added that the self can be intuited directly and also that the self may be inferred from the "marks" of its presence. "The self is not proved only by revelation, since, as ether is proved by sound, so the self is proved in particular by the innate as well as the sensible cognition in the form if *I*, accompanied by the invariable divergence of such cognition from all other things, as is the case with sound."[16] It seems fair to conclude that the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika philosophers welcomed the support of revelation for the existence of the self as a spiritual substance, but they preferred to place greater emphasis on the other means of establishing the self's reality.

A third argument for the existence of a self other than the body or the mind is based on what the *Vaiśeṣika Sūtras* call "the universal experience of the objects of the senses".[17] By this is meant the experience by which color sensation, odor sensation, and taste sensation are combined into the perception of a total object, *e.g.*, a guava. Each of the senses is associated with a specific aspect of objects; but there must be some other agency to organize these separate experiences into one total experience of objects. According to the *Nyāya Sūtras*, "The sense is not soul because we can apprehend an object through both sight and touch."[18] That is, the senses cannot function as soul functions because a person can be aware of the guava as a yellow-green color, as a sweet odor, and as a distinctive taste yet no sense can do all these. The soul or self cannot be sight alone, or smell alone, or taste alone, but it must be something separate from and other than the senses. Another way to state the necessity of soul as an entity above the senses is to point out that such expressions as "Previously I saw the jar and now I touch it" would be meaningless if the *I* were not different from the senses.

The last observation leads to another argument for the reality of a substantial self: the argument based on memory. If there were

[15] *Vaiśeṣika Sūtras*, III. 2. 9.
[16] *Vaiśeṣika Sūtras*, III. 2. 18.
[17] *Vaiśeṣika Sūtras*, III. 1. 2.
[18] *Nyāya Sūtras*, III. 1. 1.

no permanent self, one could not recall having seen or heard things before. Yet an old person does remember events that happened and things he did sixty or seventy years earlier when his body was quite different from the body he now has. There is a self-identity which is other than the body. "Memory belongs to the soul which possesses the character of a knower."[19] An agent distinct from the senses is needed to explain the acts of seeing, touching, etc. According to Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika when one sees it is the self which sees by the eyes, when one hears it is the self that hears by the ears, when one smells it is the self that smells by the nose, and when one thinks it is the self that thinks by the mind. Mind is an instrument of knowing, not the agent of knowing. If one were to insist that it is "mind" which remembers and organizes sensations into perceptions, then one must find another name to designate the agent which perceived qualities such as cognition, desire, aversion, volition, pain, and pleasure. The name is not important, but, insist the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika philosophers, one terms must designate the rememberer and the organizer, and another term must designate the cognizer, the desirer, and the willer. The appeal to memory, as noted previously, also becomes an argument for reincarnation. Joy, fear, and grief arise in a child from memory of things previously experienced. It is the transmigrating self which remembers the corresponding things of the past life. Preferences and habit patterns appear in the baby far earlier than could be supposed on the basis of the experiences in the present bodily form. Hence, again this argues for the reality of a self which existed prior to the present incarnation. The smile of a new-born baby, said Gotama, can arise only from memories of a previous experience.

A fifth argument is based on the fact that the activity of the body gives the appearance of being directed. According to Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika philosophers bodily behavior is directed behavior, and the soul is the director. One argument proceeds in analogous fashion: "As from the motion of a chariot we infer the existence of an intelligent guiding agent in the shape of the charioteer, so also we infer an intelligent guiding agent for the body, from the

[19] *Nyāya Sūtras*, III. 2. 43.

activity and cessation from activity appearing in the body, which have the capacity of acquiring the desirable and avoiding the undesirable object." [20]

The above five arguments are the major arguments for the self in the works of the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika philosophers. There are other arguments. One, for example, is that there must be a soul or otherwise one could get rid of sin by destroying the body; and another argument is that there must be a soul since it is a sin to cremate a living body but not a sin to cremate a dead body. These arguments are loaded with so many assumptions that they lose their force in the effort to establish their assumptions, at least so it seems to Western minds.

The ideal human life according to Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika philosophers is not attained until the individual is convinced that the self exists as a permanent substantial reality, other than mind and body, beyond all pleasure and pain. Then there will come an end to the egoism which links the self with the body. The *I* will take on new meaning. The tyranny of the wrong view of the self will be overthrown, and, through right knowledge and practice of meditation upon the true nature of the self under the guidance of a *guru*, the individual will at the death of the body reach the final goal of life. As a liberated self he will achieve perfect freedom from suffering. But even in liberation each self will retain its distinctiveness. The *jivātman* will not be merged into *Paramātman*. The differences among the individual liberated souls and the differences between the souls and God are eternal.

[20] *The Padārthadharmasaṁgraha,* V. 44.

VI. THE SELF IN ADVAITA VEDĀNTA

The system of philosophy known as *Vedānta* is the apex of Indian philosophical thought. The term *Vedānta* means *the end of the Vedas*. Vedānta is an end in two senses: it is the philosophy based on the Upanishads – the last parts of the Vedic writings, and it is the goal of all Indian speculations, *i.e.*, according to its disciples. Vedāntists regard their system as the synthesis of all other systems. For them it formulates the distinctive spirit of Hinduism. Vedānta is the only Indian philosophy which *directly* plays a part in modern Indian civilization. In India today nearly all educated Indians, except insofar as they have embraced Western ideas and values, are Vedāntists. Vedāntists hold that *Brahman* is the first cause of the world, that knowledge of *Brahman* leads to final liberation, and that *Brahman* can be known through the scriptures and not through mere reasonings.

There are five schools of Vedāntic philosophy. The oldest school, the most influential, and the one to which three-fourths[1] of the Vedāntists belong is the Advaita school founded by Śaṅkara in the early part of the ninth century A.D. Since the time of Śaṅkara four schools have developed out of different conclusions concerning the unity of being, the reality of the physical world, and the relation of the human self to *Brahman*. These four are the Viśiṣṭadvaita of Rāmānuja, the Dvaita of Madhva, the Śuddhādvaita of Viṣṇunsvāmin, and the Dvaitādvaita of Nimbārka. Some scholars contend that these non-Śaṅkarite systems came into being because Śaṅkara had ignored the common people's

[1] Richard Garbe, *Hastings Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. 12, p. 597.

longings for a personal god, their conviction of the reality of the physical world, and their desire for preservation of the individual soul. S. K. De, for example, has written, "Each of these schools, therefore, wrote a fresh commentary on the *Vedānta-Sūtras*, in which an attempt was made to establish a theory which would permit the individual exercise of love and piety in a world of reality."[2] The chief difference among the four schools was in regard to the relationship of *Brahman,* the world, and the souls. The concept of the self in the four schools is sufficiently alike that it is unnecessary to examine the views of the self of each school in this study. Only the Viśiṣṭādvaita view of the self will be presented. Viśiṣṭādvaita Vedānta is the second largest Vedāntic school in India today.

The founders of the five Vedāntic schools regarded the Upanishads as divine revelations (*śruti*). They assumed therefore that all the ideas presented in the Upanishads were compatible. Non-Hindu scholars who have studied the Upanishads have not felt the pressure to create a consistent whole of the doctrines of the Upanishads. They account for differences in emphasis and contradictory statements by pointing out that the Upanishads were composed over a period of many generations by many different teachers. The Upanishads appear to non-Hindu scholars to have been designed as textbooks, or even exercise books, to take the student where he was in his spiritual development and to carry him as far as his talents and interests allowed toward the experience of identity of the human self and the Cosmic Absolute. This was known as the principle of *adhikāribheda*, the principle of leading up. Different interpretations of these writings, argue the non-Hindu scholars, were possible since an interpreter might choose to emphasize any stage of the levels of spiritual progress: dualism of God and nature, or immanence of God in nature, or identity of *Ātman* and *Brahman.* Vivekananda, the swami who awakened interest in Hinduism in the United States in the early part of the twentieth century, arrived at a strikingly similar position: "It was given to me to live with a man (Ramakrishna) who was as ardent

[2] Sushil Kumar De, *Early History of the Vaiṣṇava Faith and Movement in Bengal* (Calcutta, Great Printers and Publishers, 1942), p. 3.

a Dualist, as ardent an Advaitist, as ardent a Bhakti, as ardent a Jnani; and living with this man first put it into my head to understand the Upanishads and the texts of the scriptures from an independent and better basis than by blindly following the commentators; and in my humble opinion, and in my researches I came to the conclusion that these texts are not at all contradictory but wonderfully harmonious, one idea leading up to the other. In all the Upanishads, they begin with Dualistic ideas, with worship and all that and end with a grand flourish of Advaitic ideas."[3] The Vedāntic philosophers living in India today generally show tolerance toward members of the different schools within the Vedānta, although the Advaitic monopoly of the teaching positions in Indian universities is a source of irritation for the Viśiṣṭādvaita Vedāntists.

The *Bhagavad-Gītā* was an early attempt to make a system out of Upanishadic doctrines. It was composed in the fifth century B.C. in a form which would appeal to ordinary men, yet would contain sufficient depth to challenge the wisest philosophers. As a result, the laymen thrilled to its theism, and the scholars despaired of making sense of its metaphysics. Radhakrishnan has said, "The *Gītā* stands midway between a philosophical system and a poetic inspiration."[4] From the fifth to the second centuries B.C. many philosophers wrote aphorisms or *sūtras* which attempted to state the message of the Upanishads in precise language. The meaning of the word *sūtra, i.e.*, a clue, indicates another reason for the writing of these documents: they were designed as memory-aids to assist students in recalling the teachings of their *gurus*. The names of Audulomi, Kāsakritsna, Bādari, Jaimini, Kārshnājini, and Asmarathya were mentioned by later writers as authors of *sūtras*. The only one of these collections which has survived is the *Vedānta-Sūtras* or *Brahma-Sūtras* of Bādarāyana. Bādarāyana's collection is probably the last and the best.[5] But the *Vedānta-*

[3] *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda,* Vol. 8 (Mayavati, Almora, Himalayas, Advaita Ashrama, 1931), pp. 233-234.
[4] S. Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy,* Vol. 1 (London, George Allen and Unwin, 1951), p. 522.
[5] Swami Vireswarananda, *Brahma-Sūtras* (Mayavata, Almora, Himilayas, Advaita Ashrama, 1948), p. vi.

Sūtras of Bādarāyana were not clear. In fact, they were more cryptic than the Upanishads themselves. The frugality of the *sūtra* writers in their use of words was expressed in a saying which has been preserved to the present day: "An author rejoiceth in the economizing of half a short vowel as much as in the birth of a son." Furthermore, the *sūtras* could have different meanings depending upon where the reader wished to divide the long connected Sanskrit words; there was no way of determining which *sūtras* expressed the author's views; and the *sūtras* did not indicate which texts of the Upanishads were being discussed. Hence arose the need for commentaries to explain the treatises which had been written to explain the Upanishads! Each of the five Vedāntic schools had its own commentary on the *Vedānta-Sūtras*, and each commentator claimed that his was the one which captured the meaning of Bādarāyana.

The founders of the five Vedāntic schools based their doctrines on the Upanishads, the *Bhagavad-Gītā*, and the *Vedānta-Sūtras*. These were called "the triple foundation of the Vedānta". This common foundation accounts for the similarity of thought in the schools.

Śaṅkara (788–820?) regarded himself as an accurate expounder of the doctrines taught in the "triple foundation", but many scholars have not agreed with his self-estimation. For example, S. C. Chakravarti says, "Śaṅkara was a great intellectual of his time. He was also a past master of dialectics. He was well qualified to be the founder of a new system, and had he done so, it would have been judged on its own merits. But when he took on himself the role of a commentator, he had no right to forget his position and foist upon the Upanishads a philosophy of his own . . . As an exponent of the art of dialectics, he may be looked upon as a great success, but as an interpreter of the Upanishads, he is a huge failure."[6] George Thibaut in the introduction to his translation of Śaṅkara's commentary on the *Vedānta-Sūtras* opined that Rāmānuja presented more accurately the doctrine expressed in the *Vedānta-Sūtras* than did Śaṅkara – a view shared by Sukhtankar,

[6] Sures Chandra Chakravarti, *Human Life and Beyond* (Calcutta, University of Calcutta Press, 1947), p. 52.

Jacobi, Keith, and many others. Thibaut complained in the introduction to his translation of Rāmānuja's commentary on the *Vedānta-Sūtras* that for making this observation he had been charged by Advaitists with "philosophic incompetency" and that he was said to be "hopelessly theistic due to early training".[7] Thibaut ought not to have been surprised by the savage manner in which he was attacked, since Advaita Vedānta in the minds of many of its followers is a religion, and religionists are not noted for fairness or moderation when defending their faith. One Advaitist has written, "Vedānta is primarily a religion, and it is a philosophy only as the formulation of this religion. All religion makes for the realization of the self as sacred, but the religion of Advaita is the specific cult of such realization understood explicitly as self-knowledge, as sacred knowledge, and as nothing but knowledge."[8] To Chakravarti, who says, "Śaṁkara had no justification whatsoever to override clear and repeated texts",[9] the reply can be made that Śaṅkara's justification was fidelity to his own vision of the truth. A religious genius cannot be faithless to his inner experience. In defending that experience he will select, adapt, and modify supporting materials. The view expressed by S. K. Das is a more temperate one: "Commentators of the *Vedānta-sūtras*, there have been – and their number is a legion – such as Śrinkantha, Bhāskara, Rāmānuja, Nimvārka, Madhva, Vallabha, and Baladeva among others – who have, by adopting a policy of pick-and-choose, of stressing a point here and dropping a point there, of straining and twisting the resources of logic, sought to cater to demands that are extra-philosophical and thus win the day. . . . He [Śaṅkara] overrides others by the sheer force of his greatness – by the compelling greatness, in particular, of his logic of absolutism, or what is the same thing, his logic of comprehension. The whole host of other commentators exhibit in their

[7] *The Vedānta-Sūtras with the Commentary of Rāmānuga*. Translated by George Thibaut. *The Sacred Books of the East* [*SBE*], Vol. 48 (Oxford, The Clarendon Press, 1904), p. ix.
[8] Krisnachandra Bhattacharyya, *Studies in Philosophy*, Vol. 2 (Calcutta, Progressive Publishers, 1958), p. 118.
[9] Sures Chandra Chakravarti, *The Philosophy of the Upanishads* (Calcutta, University of Calcutta Press, 1935), p. ix.

interpretation what may be called thoughts of arrested development; and whether of the form of qualified monism (*viśiṣṭādvaita*) or of dualism (*dvaita*), they all point by force of their unconscious logic to Advaita-Vedānta of the Śaṁkarite type as their natural culmination."[10] In this study of the Advaita Vedānta view of the self the question of the reliability of Śaṅkara as interpreter of the Upanishads and the *Vedānta-Sūtras* need not be settled. Śaṅkara's view of the self will be considered without attempting to determine if this view is the one expressed in the Upanishads and in the *Vedānta-Sūtras*.

Śaṅkara set himself to the task of reviving Vedic culture at a time when primitive superstitions and magical practices were displacing the noble idealism and practical wisdom of the early Buddhists. In his short life he not only wrote commentaries on the principal Upanishads, the *Vedānta-Sūtras*, and the *Bhagavad-Gītā*, but he also established four monasteries at widely separated places in India and reorganized Hindu life so the *sannyasis* – those who set themselves apart for the study of spiritual lore – were re-established as the religious leaders of Indian society. The serious and practical motivations of Śaṅkara are obvious in the criteria he laid down for the study of Vedānta philosophy. He required that a prospective student of Vedānta give evidence of *viveka* (discrimination between that which is eternal and that which is non-eternal), *vairāgya* (renunciation of the hope for happiness in either this life or the next), *shatsampatti* (calmness, self-control, relinquishment, forbearance, concentration, and an affirmative attitude of mind), and *mumukshutwam* (longing to become free from all bondage).[11] The aim of Vedānta according to Śaṅkara was to remove that which stood in the way of man's salvation. Śaṅkara was not a disinterested philosopher. The truth which he sought was not scientific truth but religious truth, that is, the truth which would set men free from bondage to things which were not completely real and eternal. In other words, Śaṅkara's philosophy was primarily

[10] Saroj Kumar Das, *A Study of the Vedānta* (Calcutta, University of Calcutta Press, 1937), pp. 29-30.
[11] Swami Nikhilandanda, *Self-knowledge* (Madras, Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1947), pp. 43-46.

a philosophy of value. It was more than a theory; it was a program for the realization of values. In the words of a modern Indian philosopher, "Śaṅkara's philosophy concerns itself with the problem of 'appearance and reality' only in so far as this is necessary to bring out in bolder relief the value-side of the universe. For Śaṅkara the truth of the universe is constituted by the value it possessed. . . . value and reality are identical in his system."[12]

The fundamental reality of the universe according to Śaṅkara is *Brahman*. In the words of the *Vedānta-Sūtras* "Brahman is that omniscient, omnipotent cause from which proceed the origin, etc. (*i.e.*, sustenance and dissolution) of this world."[13] From man's experience of the external world he can infer the existence of a cause of the world, but he cannot establish what is the nature of that cause, nor can he establish that there is but one cause. Śaṅkara contended that *Brahman* cannot be known without appeal to the revelation of the Upanishads. Non-revealed writings (*smriti*) such as the *Bhagavad-Gītā* help in knowing the *Brahman*, since they were written as attempts to explain revelations. *Brahman* is the completely real Being. It is pure Being.[14] It is being *a priori*, that is, the Being necessary in order for anything to be; it is not being *a posteriori*, that is, a being discovered by empirical experiences. It is the basis of the empirical world, although it cannot be experienced in itself.

The Upanishads, claimed Śaṅkara, described *Brahman* from two points of view: the higher knowledge (*parā vidyā*) and the lower knowledge (*aparā vidyā*). This distinction has been known in the West as the Way of Truth and the Way of Opinion, or as

[12] Ram Pratap Singh, *The Vedānta of Śaṅkara* (Jaipur, Bharat Publishing House, 1949), pp. 11-12.
[13] *Vedānta-Sūtras*, I. 1. 2. Vireswarananda translation, p. 26. Throughout the rest of this chapter *Vedānta-Sūtras* will denote the *Vedānta-Sūtras* or *Brahma-Sūtras* with the commentary of Śaṅkara. The quotations will be taken either from George Thibaut (translator), *The Vedānta-Sūtras with the Commentary of Śaṅkarakarya* (= *The Sacred Books of the East* [*SBE*], Vols. 34, 38) (Oxford, The Clarendon Press, Vol. 34, 1890, Vol. 38, 1896) or from Swami Vireswarananda, *Brahma-Sūtras* (Mayavata, Almora, Himilayas, Advaita Ashrama, 1948).
[14] *Brahman* is designated by the neuter *it* to avoid any implications of personality.

the world viewed under the aspect of etrenity and the world viewed under the aspect of time. *Parā vidyā* and *aparā vidyā* can be traced throughout the Advaita Vedānta system. Much of the confusion in the interpretation of Śaṅkara has stemmed from forgetting that the Absolute, the world, and the soul can be considered from either point of view. To fail to detect the centrality of the two-fold knowledge in Advaita Vedānta is to miss the plan by which Śaṅkara was able to form a consistent system from the rich variety of the Upanishadic writings.

The *Brahman* of the higher form of knowing is the *Brahman* without attributes (*Nirguṇa Brahman*); the *Brahman* of the lower form of knowing is the *Brahman* with attributes (*Saguṇa Brahman*). *Nirguṇa Brahman* is so devoid of attributes that the correct response to any statement which applies attributes to it is "*Nēti! Nēti!*" (Not this! Not this!, or Inadequate! Inadequate!).[15] *Nirguṇa Brahman* therefore cannot be described as good or evil, as just or unjust, or as loving or non-loving. All attributes are inadequate, for they denote an order of reality less than Absolute Reality. *Brahman*[16] is sometimes described as *satchitānanda* (Being-Consciousness-Bliss). This may seem to be a violation of the doctrine of *Nēti*, but such is not the case, for to say that Brahman is Being-Consciousness-Bliss is not to say that Brahman exists, is conscious, or is happy. *Nēti! Nēti!* still holds.

Brahman does not exist as a tree exists, but *Brahman* is that which makes it possible for the tree to exist in the way in which a tree exists. The same word cannot be used to denote both Absolute Being and empirical existence. As Deussen has said, "Existence [of Brahman] . . . is opposed to all empirical Existence, so that, in comparison with this it can just as well be indicated as Non-Existence."[17] The existence of *Brahman* is an absolute existence, a really Real, a Being that could not not be. *Brahman's*

[15] Cf. Spinoza's *Omnis determinatio negatio est* (All determining is negating). Also Eckhart's "God is unlike to anything and like to nothing. He is above all being. He is the naught."

[16] The word *Brahman* unless otherwise specified will hereafter mean *Nirguṇa Brahman*.

[17] Paul Deussen, *The System of the Vedānta*, translated by Charles Johnston (Chicago, Open Court Publishing Co., 1912), pp. 211-212.

existence can be contrasted both to non-existence or false existence, a form of existence which can be spoken about and thought about but cannot be, *e.g.*, the non-existence of the son of a barren woman, and also to illusory existence or phenomenal existence, a form of existence in which a thing is taken to be one thing although it is really another, *e.g.*, a rope mistaken at twilight for a snake. *Brahman* must not be regarded as a remote being, hiding in some distant corner of the universe. *Brahman* is the foundation of all existence, the ultimate basis of all things, the material and efficient cause of the world, the transcendent unity behind all plurality, the permanence that makes change possible. *Brahman* acts upon itself and causes the phenomenal world to be. Śaṅkara recognized the problem of *Brahman's* creativity: "If it be said that Brahman without extraneous aids cannot be the cause of the world because an agent is seen to collect materials for any construction, we say no, since it is like milk turning to curds."[18] *Brahman* is present in all its manifestations, and, since the entire universe is a manifestation of *Brahman, Brahman* is experienced indirectly in all experiences of the macrocosmos and the microcosmos, of the world without and the world within. *Brahman*, like space, makes possible spatial experiences, yet it is not experienced directly.

Brahman is the essence of Consciousness. *Brahman* is not conscious as minds can be conscious. It is the foundation of knowledge. It is self-knowing in a direct manner. It knows without separating subject and object. *Brahman* is above all duality, both metaphysical duality and epistemological duality. *Brahman* is the Knower of knowing. It is self-sufficient, and hence is spiritual, for no material thing can be self-sufficient. Consciousness, Thought, or Knowledge is the substance, not an attribute, of *Brahman*. In the words of Keith ". . . it is consciousness without any object or subject, and therefore differs so entirely from the very nature of consciousness as not in our view to deserve the name at all."[19] *Nēti! Nēti!*

[18] *Vedānta-Sūtras*, II. 1. 24. Vireswarananda translation, p. 188.

[19] Arthur Berriedale Keith, *The Religion and Philosophy of the Veda and Upanishads, Harvard Oriental Series*, Vol. 32 (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1925), p. 507.

Brahman is the essence of Happiness. *Brahman* is not happy as men may be happy, but *Brahman* is the foundation of Happiness. Its Happiness, like its Being and its Knowledge, is not to be identified with man's experiences. "The bliss also is that of being which has no consciousness of any kind and no feeling, and therefore is merely a metaphorical expression." [20] *Nēti! Nēti!*

The uniqueness of *satchitānanda* stems from *Brahman's* lack of all limitations. A tree that exists does not non-exist; a mind that is conscious is not unconscious; and a person that is happy is not unhappy. Ordinary existence, consciousness, and happiness are limitations. *Brahman's* Existence, Consciousness, and Happiness are not limitations. Hence from the view of *aparā* knowledge *Brahman* is and is not, is conscious and is unconscious, and is happy and is unhappy. From the view of *parā* knowledge *Brahman* is the ground of all Reality, of all Truth, and of all Happiness. According to Advaita Vedānta knowledge and values are not extraneities grafted by man upon the world; they are integrants of reality.

Saguṇa Brahman, the lower *Brahman*, is the same Reality seen from another point of view. This lower point of view seems to be a false point of view, but the falsity is only a falsity when contrasted with the higher point of view. The tree down the street appears to be shorter than the tree under which one is standing, yet when both trees are measured they are discovered to be about the same size. Likewise when *Nirguṇa Brahman* is regarded as an object of man's awareness, it takes on characteristics which are only appearances, although these characteristics are not appearances to those who are aware from the lower point of view. A dream world seems real to the dreamer. *Saguṇa Brahman* is a personal being designated by the pronoun *He*. The Being without attributes now is seen to possess infinite attributes. The unfathomable First Cause becomes an object of worship. *Saguṇa Brahman* is called *Īśvara* (Lord) and is worshipped by the devout as *Brahmā* the Creator, Viśnu the Preserver, and Śiva the Destroyer. But Īśvara and his appearances as Brahmā, Viśnu, and Śiva are real only from the lower point of view. The man who has attained the

[20] *Ibid.*

higher point of view knows that fundamentally and ultimately only *Nirguṇa Brahman* exists.

When the Advaita Vedāntists insisted that *Brahman* could not be known, they meant that *Brahman* could not be known *as things are known*. In knowing the knower stands outside the object. *Brahman* cannot be an object, since an object is an object only when there is a subject removed from the object, and there is nothing other than *Brahman*. Neither can *Brahman* be a subject, since a subject is a subject only in relation to an object, and, once again, there is nothing outside *Brahman*. One who tries to know *Brahman* in the subject-object form of knowing is like one who tries to see the eye with the eye.

The world is a self-manifestation of *Brahman*. Creation is coeval with the being of *Brahman*. *Brahman* reveals itself in a world for no other reason than motiveless sport or pastime (*līlā*). "Even as kings without any motive behind are seen to engage in acts for mere pastime, or even as men breathe without a purpose, for it is their very nature, or even as children play out of mere fun, so also Brahman without any purpose engages itself in creating this world of diversity." [21] The *how* of *Brahman's* creation is equally puzzling, for *Brahman* cannot act upon anything other than itself since the reality of anything other than *Brahman* would be a limitation of *Brahman*. The Advaitic conception of creation is unlike the usual Western conception since it is not something done once and for all, but rather it is a periodic emergence from and return to *Brahman*. Creation is the revelation of *Brahman's* own nature, and, since *Brahman* is inexhaustible, no act of creation and no collection of creative acts can fully express *Brahman*. The formation of the world is never completed. There is an eternal process of evolution and involution.

If *Brahman* is the only reality, what sort of reality does the world have? In dealing with this problem Śaṅkara seized upon an Upanishadic expression *iva* (as it were) [22] and developed the doctrine of *māyā*. The term *māyā* first appeared in the *Rig Veda* to denote a kind of magical power. Later in the Upanishads – at

[21] *Vedānta-Sūtras*, II. 1. 33. Vireswarananda translation, p. 195.
[22] *E.g., Bṛihad-Āraṇyaka Upanishad*, 2. 4. 14; 4. 3. 8; 4. 3. 13.

least as they are interpreted by Śaṅkara – it became the power of *Brahman* to manifest itself in a world which has *iva* reality. The world itself is then said to be *māyā*, and *māyā* is often translated as *illusion* or *unreality* both by Indian and Western scholars. Müller once wrote, "If we ask for the fundamental doctrines of the Vedānta, the Hindus themselves have helped us and given us in a few words what they themselves consider as the quintessence of that system of thought. I quoted these words at the end of my 'Three Lectures on the Vedānta' (1894): – 'In one half verse I shall tell you what has been taught in thousands of volumes: Brahman is true, the world is false, the soul is Brahman and nothing else.' . . . This *résumé* of the Vedānta is very true, and very helpful as a *résumé* of that system of philosophy."[23] Müller believed that both the Upanishads and Śaṅkara taught the unreality of the world. Gough shared this opinion. Gough said that *māyā* was "part and parcel of the primitive cosmological conception".[24] Schopenhauer read the Upanishads in similar fashion and thereby found support for his own view of the world as will and idea. Chakravarti believed that the Upanishads taught that the world was unreal, but he denied that Śaṅkara taught this doctrine. He said in rebuttal to Müller, "In one half verse I shall tell my reader what has been clearly taught in the Upanishads: Brahman is true, the world is true, the world, like everything else, is Brahman and nothing else."[25] Chakravarti added, "If it is once admitted that Brahman is the one ultimate reality, I fail to understand how there can be room left for developing the idea that something *exists*, but yet is not true . . . . There is no such thing as unreal; everything is real, since all are movement in the all-comprehensive reality of Brahman."[26] Chakravarti suggested that Śaṅkara borrowed the idea of *māyā* from the Buddhists, although, unlike the Buddhists, Śaṅkara retained *Brahman*. He wrote, "Far from being the main basis of the Upanishad philosophy, the doc-

[23] F. Max Müller, *The Six Systems of Indian Philosophy* (London, Longmans, Green and Co., 1912), pp. 121-122.
[24] A. E. Gough, *The Philosophy of the Upanishads and Ancient Indian Metaphysics* (London, Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner and Co., 1891), p. xi.
[25] Sures Chandra Chakravarti, *The Philosophy of the Upanishads*, p. 129.
[26] *Ibid.*, pp. 130, 146.

trine of *Māyā* is foreign to it . . . . It is Śaṁkara alone who says that it should be concluded that everything except Brahman is illusion, because Brahman is the one reality."[27] Thibaut thought that the majority of Western scholars agreed that the doctrine of *māyā* was introduced after the writing of the Upanishads: "From Colebrook downwards the majority of European writers have inclined towards the opinion that the doctrine of *Māyā, i.e.*, of the unreal illusory character of the sensible world, does not constitute a feature of the primitive philosophy of the Upanishads, but was introduced into the system at some later period, whether by Bādarāyana or Śaṅkara or somebody else."[28]

Others deny that Śaṅkara taught that the world is unreal. For example, R. P. Singh said, "Śaṅkara's intention is not to preach any variety of subjective idealism or to lay the foundations of mentalism."[29] He argued that the example of the rope and the snake was not intended to prove the illusoriness or utter non-existence of the world, but rather it was used to warn against assigning the first principle of reality to the wrong things, *i.e.*, to the spatial-temporal world rather than to *Brahman*: "It is not the thing that is false; it is the consciousness of an alien reality, of a foreign substance, of otherness, which is believed to constitute the essence of things, that is false and is to be given up."[30] Kokileswar Sastri said, "A charge has often been brought against the Adwaita system of philosophy to the effect that in this school the world has been treated merely as an appearance and as an illusion. . . . The current belief in this respect is that Śaṅkara's theory of Adwaita-vada unmistakably teaches us the falsity of the world, – that Brahman being considered to be the only Reality, everything else we find in the world must needs be unreal and false."[31] This Advaitist pointed out that Śaṅkara mentioned three kinds of objects of

[27] *Ibid.*, pp. 203, 202.
[28] *The Vedānta-Sūtras with the Commentary by Śaṅkarakarya. SBE*, Vol. 34, p. cxvi.
[29] Ram Pratap Singh, *The Vedānta of Śaṅkara* (Jaipur, Bharat Publishing House, 1949), p. 333.
[30] *Ibid.*, p. 334.
[31] Vidyaratna Kokileswar Sastri, *An Introduction to Adwaita Philosophy* (Calcutta, University of Calcutta Press, 1926), p. 123.

mentation. There are objects such as a barren woman's son or a rabbit's horn which Śaṅkara said were false (*alīka*) and unreal (*asat*) because they do not serve any practical purpose in the world. Secondly, there are objects such as a rope which appears to be a snake. These objects have a ground to sustain them as long as they appear. They do serve practical purposes of man. These objects Śaṅkara said were unreal but not false. The third class of objects are those of our common experience which seem to be neither unreal nor false. Trees, flowers, desks, etc. belong to this class. These objects, like those of the second class, have an underlying sustaining ground. Because of their substrata, objects of both the second and the third classes are said to be real when contrasted with the objects of the first class, although the objects of both the second and the third classes were regarded as unreal by Śaṅkara when he compared them with the Reality of *Brahman*. Perhaps the objects of the second and third classes ought to be described as "relatively unreal". Other Advaitists have reached the same conclusion, although they have often not expressed themselves as clearly as did Sastri. For example, K. C. Bhattacharyya has said that *māyā* "cannot be characterized as either real or as unreal".[32] K. A. Krishnaswami Iyer has noted that "the world is not a mere phantasy, it is not a summer dream, it is but the disguise worn by Reality to the time-bound intellect".[33] Radhakrishnan said that for Śaṅkara "unreal the world is, illusory it is not".[34] A. C. Mukerji has given one of the clearest formulations of this solution of the problem of *māyā*: "The world of plurality is perfectly real from the standpoint of finite experience; but when looked at from that of the Infinite experience, it is even less than a dream or illusion, and, as such, it has never existed in the past, does not exist at present, and will never exist in the future."[35]

It may be that the later Advaitists have made more of this doctrine than Śaṅkara himself did. The only passage in the *Vedānta-*

[32] Krishnachandra Bhattacharyya, *Studies in Philosophy*, Vol. 2, p. 115.
[33] K. A. Krishnaswami Iyer, *Vedānta, or the Science of Reality* (Madras, Ganesh and Co., 1930), p. 91.
[34] Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy*, Vol. 2, p. 583.
[35] A. C. Mukerji, *The Nature of the Self* (Allahabad, The Indian Press, 1943), p. 287, footnote 29.

Sūtras in which the term *māyā* appears states merely that the dream world is illusory: "But the dream world is mere illusion, on acount of its nature not being manifest with the totality of attributes of the waking states."[36] Śaṅkara's comment on this *sūtra* is: "The nature of the dream world does not agree *in toto* with that of the waking world with respect to time, place, cause, and non-contradiction, and as such that world is not real like the waking world."[37] The difficulty to be noted in the works of later Advaitists is dual: the Advaitists have sometimes taken as completely fictitious what for Śaṅkara was merely phenomenal, and the Advaitists have sometimes forgotten that the reality or unreality of the world of empirical experiences depends upon the point of view of the knower – objects which are real to the ordinary man may be unreal to the enlightened man. The truth and reality of *aparā* knowledge may be the falsity and unreality of *parā* knowledge. Another way of stating the situation would be to note that the principle which accounts for the seeming derivatives from *Brahman* may be examined from two points of view: From the higher or cosmic point of view *māyā* is the source of the physical world – here it is like *prakṛti* in Sāṅkhya, save that *prakṛti* is thought to be real, whereas *māyā* is not thought to be real. From the lower or individual point of view *māyā* is the cause of the delusion under which man exists in his unenlightened state.

Thus far in this analysis of Advaita Vedānta two of the three entities in a complete metaphysical system have been considered: God and the world. The role of "God" in Advaita Vedānta is played by *Brahman* – the Being of all existence, the Knower of all knowledge, and the Foundation of all bliss. *Brahman* is beyond space, time, and causality, yet manifests itself in a physical world which from the empirical point of view is a spatial, temporal, and causal world, although from a higher point of view the world possesses none of these characteristics. The third entity in a metaphysical system is the self. Much that Śaṅkara wrote about *Brahman* as the First Principle of Objective Reality and about the phenomenal status of the experienced world was arresting; but it

[36] *Vedānta-Sūtras*, III. 2. 3. Vireswarananda translation, p. 320.
[37] *Vedānta-Sūtras*, III. 2. 3. Vireswarananda translation, p. 320.

was his view of the individual self which was most striking, for he was the only one of the commentators on Bādarāyana's *Vedānta-Sūtras* who did not interpret the individual self to be in reality an atom, an agent, and a part of God.

Any attempt to prove the existence of the self in one sense cannot fail, argued Śaṅkara, since the existence of the self is a presupposition of all reasoning. Even the effort to disprove the existence of the self establishes the self, because the transcendent condition of knowledge is presupposed in the very act of refutation. "Just because it is the Self, it is impossible for us to entertain the idea even of its being capable of refutation. For the knowledge of the Self is not, in any person's case, adventitious, not established through the so-called means of right knowledge: it rather is self-established."[38] The doubter cannot doubt that he as doubter exists. The search for the self was often likened by the Advaitists to a man looking for a necklace which he was wearing around his neck. A better analogy would be to compare the search for the self to a person who looked for his spectacles unaware that he was wearing the very spectacles for which he was searching. As Bradley has said about the self, ". . . either in endeavouring to deny it, or even in attempting to doubt it, we tacitly assume its validity".[39] *Vedāntic Ātmavidyā* started with *sum,* not with a Cartesian *cogito*. For the Vedāntist, both Advaita and Viśiṣṭādvaita, it is better to postulate "I am" and to conclude "Therefore I think" than to postulate "I think" and to conclude "Therefore I am". The Vedāntic philosophers believed that it was the nature of the self, not the reality of the self, which needed to be proved. The self must seek itself in order to find *what* it is, not *that* it is.

The self according to Śaṅkara is the unchanging substratum which underlies the changes in the life history of a person. In his argument against the Buddhist concept of momentariness, Śaṅkara contended that the common experience of memory indicates that there is something in man which does not change. What one self has sensed is not remembered by another self, but by the same

[38] *Vedānta-Sūtras,* II. 3. 7. Thibaut translation, *SBE,* Vol. 38, p. 14.
[39] Francis Herbert Bradley, *Appearance and Reality* (New York, The Macmillan Company, 1893), p. 120.

self. A man upon awakening from sleep recalls where he left off his past work.

Even though man often refers to the physical body as part of his self – and the Cārvāka philosophers regarded the body as the whole of the self – Advaita Vedāntists insisted that a careful distinction must be made between the physical body and the real self. *Adhyāsa,* the false identification of the self and the body, is one of the chief impedimenta to the process of liberation. In the words of a living Advaitist, "There is only one original sin. It is the sin of primal ignorance, – the ignorance that I am embodied, that the body is mine. Having confused our real, transcendent, pure and untainted Self with the body, both physical and mental, we act as though the body was an essential part of our Self. We perceive with the body. We think with the body. We use methods of knowledge immanent in the body. We have created the whole illusion of a world with the body. If we could dissolve the confusion and the error through discriminative thought and see the truth of the Self, the illusion would disappear."[40] In the embodied state in which the self exists from physical birth to physical death the self has certain characteristics which do not pertain to the essential nature of the self. Layer after layer of the non-self covers the self and produces nescience of the real self. These coverings are called *koṣas* (sheaths). There are five of these sheaths. They are divided into three bodies: the gross body, the subtle body, and the causal body. The gross body, the body with physical organs made of the simple elements, is the non-migrating body. This body is called the *annamaya koṣa, i.e.,* the sheath formed by food. The subtle body is that which is carried over into the next incarnation of the soul. This migrating body is formed of three sheaths: the *prāṇamaya koṣa,* the motor functions or the principle of vitality; the *manomaya koṣa,* the volitional factors or sources of desire which direct man to the performance of ego-centric acts; and the *vijñānamaya koṣa,* the active agent which motivates man to the seeking of *aparā* knowledge. The subtle body is the psychological body as distinguished from the physical body; it is the body of life, sense,

[40] Ghanshamdas Rattanmal Malkani, *Vedāntic Epistemology* (Amalner, The Indian Institute of Philosophy, 1953), p. 30.

and mind. The third body is called the causal body because it is thought to be the origin of the other two. It is the *karma* body, the residue of actions which accompanies the soul in its migrations. It is composed of but one sheath, the *ānadamaya koṣa*, the sheath of bliss, which tempts man to seek the happiness of bodily existence rather than the liberation of the self from the body. The self because of long attachment to the body has lost a true awareness of its own nature and associates itself with bodily interests. The body is a block to liberation, although the person who has reached true knowledge is free from the body even while embodied. To have or not to have a body is irrelevant from the *parā* point of view.

Śaṅkara said that the *jīva* or individual self is a subject. The significance of this observation can be revealed in noting three rejections which are implied in the statement. In the first place, if the *jīva* is a subject it cannot be an object. The knower as knower cannot be known. The *I* that is known is not *I* but *me*. The self cannot be known in the usual subject-object form of knowing. Secondly, the self as subject cannot be a creator of the world. Śaṅkara says that the self is a witness (*sākṣin*). It reveals objects of knowledge; it does not fashion them. Things of the empirical world are discovered by the self; they are not dependent on the self for their existence, although they do owe their meaning and significance to the self. These things however do not become known except as they are witnessed by the self. The self is a necessary condition for *objects of knowledge*, not for the *existence of things*, just as light is necessary for *objects of sight*, not for things themselves. Things exist apart from the knowing relationship. To be conscious of, or to know, is to witness, not to create. The *māyā* world depends upon *Brahman*, but not upon being in the awareness of *jīvas*. As Mukerji has said, "It is, therefore, important to dissociate the assertion of the priority of consciousness from the idealistic contention, and realize clearly that the doctrine of the priority of consciousness is equally compatible with the realistic belief in an independent world."[41] Śaṅkara was an ontological idealist and an epistemological realist. In the third place, the self

[41] A. C. Mukerji, *The Nature of the Self*, p. 122.

as subject cannot be unconscious. Consciousness is not an adventitious quality of the self as it was for the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika philosophers, nor is the self essentially unconscious as it was for the Sāṅkhya philosophers; rather consciousness is the essence of the self. The self is intelligence itself. The apparent unconsciousness of the self in deep sleep or in a swoon is due to the absence of an object, or at least to the inability to recall what was the object of knowledge. Śaṅkara argued that the man who recalls "I slept soundly; I had no awareness" contradicts himself for he obviously recalls that he slept soundly. For Śaṅkara waking, dreaming, and sleeping without dreams were states of consciousness. Consciousness does not lapse even in the deepest sleep, although in this state the dualism of I and not-I vanishes. To be able to say, "I slept well; I knew nothing" implies that there was a awareness during the sleeping experience, yet it was an unusual sort of experience – an experience of knowing in which there was no awareness of an object. This kind of knowing was described by Advaitists as blissful consciousness. It is the soul's essential being.

To argue that knowing in dreamless sleep is a form of knowing which does not require an object may seem to be inconsistent with another Advaitist argument, *viz.*, that *Brahman* cannot be a subject because a subject must have an object in order to be a subject. But once again the dichotomy of higher and lower knowledge is applied. Knowing in the waking experience is the lower form of knowing in which there is a separation of subject and object, whereas knowing in the dreamless sleep experience is the higher form of knowing in which subject and object become identified.

Althought *jīvas* appear to be numberless, according to Śaṅkara, when the *jīva* is in its true state it is not aware of its individuality. Then the self does not differentiate between ego and non-ego. Only when the self is associated with the body in the empirical world of waking and of dreaming does the self imagine that it is distinct from other selves, from the world, and from God. The spiritual unity which underlies the plurality of *jīvas* is called *Ātman*. The *Ātman* is sometimes called the *all-eating self* because in it that which differentiates the *jīvas* is eliminated. The *jīva* is the *Ātman* endowed with a psycho-physical organism. It is con-

sciousness which appears in the form of an internal organ (*antaḥkarana*). The individual self is an appearance of the highest Self. In the words of Śaṅkara, "And that individual soul is to be considered a mere appearance of the highest Self, like the reflection of the sun in the water; it is neither directly that (*i.e.*, the highest Self), nor a different thing. Hence just as, when one reflected image of the sun trembles, another reflected image does not on that account tremble also; so, when one soul is connected with actions and results of actions, another soul is not on that account connected likewise."[42] The difference between the *jīva* and the *Ātman* is an unreal difference since the difference is apparent only in the *māyā* world. Śaṅkara states this opinion bluntly in the following passage: "As therefore the individual self and the highest Self differ in name only, it being a settled matter that perfect knowledge has for its object the absolute oneness of the two; it is senseless to insist (as some do) on a plurality of Selfs, and to maintain that the individual soul is different from the highest Self, and the highest Self from the individual soul. For the Self is indeed called by many different names, but it is one only."[43]

The individual self in the world suffers from the illusion that its apparent individuality is a real individuality, and suffers also from a blind craving for individual existence without recognizing that this craving is the source of its misery. This craving produces action which creates results (*karma*), and *karma* causes another incarnation with attendant illusions and miseries. The *jīva* is the migrating soul (*samsārin*) which passes from one incarnation to the next until liberation.

The individual self is unreal, according to Śaṅkara, and the world is also unreal. But the two are not unreal in the same manner. If the *jīva* were unreal as the world is unreal, the process of liberation would be play-acting. The world is an entity which depends for its being upon another Being. When a man sees the world as the manifestation of Brahman, he negates the world. He then sees from the higher point of view that the order of reality

[42] *Vedānta-Sūtras,* II. 3. 50. Thibaut translation, *SBE,* Vol. 38, p. 68.
[43] *Vedānta-Sūtras,* I. 4. 22. Thibaut translation, *SBE,* Vol. 34, pp. 282-283.

which he attributed to the world was illusion. Now he looks at the rope and he does not see the snake. The individual self, on the other hand, is not negated when one sees the self from the higher point of view, for the self is not found to be completely unreal. Only certain aspects of the self are unreal, that is, its finitude and its separation from other selves. The error in affirming the reality of the world is an error regarding substance; the error in affirming the finitude and separateness of the self is an error regarding attributes. The world was thought to be what it was not; the self was thought to possess attributes which it did not posses. He who regards the world as real is like a man who mistakes a rope for a snake; but he who regards the individual self as real is like a man who looks at an object unaware that he is wearing colored glasses. When the first man recognizes that what he sees is a rope, the snake which he saw no longer exists; but when the second man becomes aware that he is wearing colored glasses and removes the glasses, the object which he saw remains, although the color of the object is changed. When *jīva* is known as *Ātman* it is still a spiritual substance, but as *Ātman* it is known as infinite in time (with no beginning and no end), infinite in space (not confined to the body), and infinite in substance (not circumscribed by the existence of anything else). In other words the *Ātman* is one.

Liberation or salvation in Advaita Vedānta is self-realization. The process of liberation will usually begin when a person becomes disgusted with worldly life. At last there dawns upon a person the conviction that in his egoistic restlessness and clinging passions he is not moving in the direction of his highest values. He follows the path of self-knowledge until he attains a direct grasp of the unreality of the qualities of finitude and separation of the *jīva* and of the reality of infinitude and unity of *Ātman*. Liberation is like breaking a jar and thus releasing the air captive in the jar. Liberation is becoming aware of what one actually is; it is an intellectual possession of an eternal reality: the non-difference of the individual self and Brahman. Salvation is becoming what one really is. Union had existed all the time but in ignorance the person had missed discovering that unity. In salvation nothing is changed other than the loss of ignorance; the self becomes aware

that it has lost itself by identifying itself with what it is not. "Thus the difference between the individual soul and the highest Lord is owing to wrong knowledge only, not to any reality." [44] Liberation is a process of intellectual discovery of a timeless fact. The person at last understands "I am *Ātman*". And with this knowledge comes complete knowledge and the end of *samsāra*. When the Self is known, all is known for the Self is the center of the world. Liberation is the state in which the self has no consciousness of external objects, for it is consciously identified with the totality of being. The state was described by Kālidāsa as "owing the whole world while disowning oneself".[45] According to the Upanishads

> He who has found and has awakened to the Soul (Ātman)
> That has entered this conglomerate abode –
> He is the maker of everything, for he is the creator of all;
> The world is his: indeed, he is the world itself.[46]

Swami Vivekananda put this even more poetically when he said that the liberated self is "like an infinite circle whose circumference is nowhere, but whose center is everywhere".[47]

"That art thou" (*tat tvam asi*) is the apex of the Advaita Vedānta philosophy. This sentence expresses the highest teachings of the Upanishads, the most audacious idea in Indian philosophy, and the greatest synthesis ever conceived by man. *Tat tvam asi* was the esoteric teaching which an ancient Indian *guru* revealed to his pupil after the *guru* was convinced the pupil was ready to receive this idea and to incorporate it into his thought and life. This doctrine must have appeared as dreadful blasphemy to the uninitiated and as sacred truth to the enlightened. It was based upon the following four Upanishadic passages which were referred to by Advaita Vedāntists as "the four great aphorisms":

> "That art thou." [48]
> "I am Brahman." [49]

44 *Vedānta-Sūtras,* I. 3. 19. Thibaut translation, *SBE,* Vol. 34, p. 187.
45 *Mālavikagnimatra,* 1. 1.
46 *Bṛihad-Āraṇyaka Upanishad,* 4. 4. 13. Hume translation.
47 *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda,* Vol. 2, p. 33.
48 *Chāndogya Upanishad,* 6. 10. 3. Hume translation.
49 *Bṛihad-Āraṇyaka Upanishad,* 1. 4. 10. Radhakrishnan translation.

> "This Brahman is the self." [50]
> "Consciousness is Brahman." [51]

"That art thou" is open to serious misunderstandings. The caution of the *gurus* in teaching this secret doctrine only to well-qualified students was fully justified. In the first place the formula seems to identify two entities, but the Advaitists insisted that the formula is not an affirmation of identity; it is a denial of duality. The word *advaita* means *non-dual.* That is, Advaita Vedāntism is not a forthright metaphysical monism, for this would assume more positive knowledge than man has a right to claim. Instead it is a denial of twoness. The meaning of the statement as understood by Advaita Vedāntic philosophers is this: although from our ordinary point of view we are aware of many dualities, such as subject-object, spirit-matter, and man-God, we believe that these dualities are not found in reality as it is in itself.

In the second place the word *That* may be understood by some people to denote God. Indeed some Advaitists have so interpreted the term. For example, S. K. Das in one of his works tried to make "That art Thou" palatable to Christians by noting that Jesus the Christ according to the Gospel records stated "I and the Father are one". Das argued that this experience of Jesus was supposed to be the experience of all man: "Why not extend the same privilege to all men who are admittedly the sons of God that they may equally say with the ideal Man: 'I am one with the Supreme Being?'"[52] Swami Vivekananda in his talks in the West sometimes referred to a passage from the Old Testament – "Ye are gods and all of you are children of the Most High" [53] – to show that the doctrine of "That art thou" is not foreign to Judaic-Christianity. But this is an inexcusable confusion of universes of discourse. *God* in Judaism and in Christianity is a theological term for a personal being sufficiently separate from man to allow the two entities to enjoy the external relation of worshipper-worshipped. When the Jew or the Christian emphasizes the unity of God and

50 *Bṛihad-Āraṇyaka Upanishad,* 2. 5. 10. Radhakrishnan translation.
51 *Aitareya Upanishad,* 3. 1. 3. Nikhilananda translation.
52 Saroj Kumar Das, *A Study of the Vedānta,* p. 163.
53 Psalm 82 : 6.

man, as he sometimes does, he certainly does not have non-duality in mind; rather he is pointing to his confidence that the highest values of man and divine values are compatible. "I am God" is nonsense and blasphemy in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. The term *That* in the formula does not mean God nor Īśvara, but Brahman.

A third possible misunderstanding would be the identification of the individual self in its individuality with *Brahman*. To make such an identification would confuse the order of *māyā* and the order of reality. "It is true that if we take the word 'thou' in the sense of the empirical individual limited and conditioned by its body, and the word 'that' as the reality beyond the world, there cannot be an identity between the 'thou' and 'that'. We have to understand, therefore, the word 'thou' to imply pure consciousness underlying man and 'that' to imply also pure consciousness which forms the essence of God."[54] It is not the individualizing, migrating self that is declared to be inseparable from Brahman, but the essential spiritual foundation of all subjective reality. "I am *Brahman*" does not mean "I as *jīva*, living in the *māyā* world, being limited by the adjuncts, and understanding from the *aparā* point of view, am *Brahman*", but "I as *Ātman*, the subjective foundation of all reality, am *Brahman*". The ultimate reality of the inner world of spirit and the ultimate reality of the outer world of matter are non-dual. The essential reality of man cannot be different from the essential reality of Totality. From the *aparā* point of view *Brahman* appears to be broken into the multiplicity of sentient principles, but from the *parā* point of view these manifestations are unreal. There is only *Ātman*, and *Ātman* is non-different from *Brahman*. *Ātman* is the subjective foundation of all reality; *Brahman* is the objective foundation of all reality. But in Ultimate Reality there is no difference between subject and object. There is really but One Being, One Consciousness. One Bliss. *Ātman* is *Brahman*.

Tat tvam asi, the fundamental Advaita Vedānta doctrine, is also a prescription for the good life on earth. An Advaitist does

[54] Satischandra Chatterjee and Dhirendramohan Datta, *An Introduction to Indian Philosophy* (Calcutta, University of Calcutta Press, 1948), p. 453.

not escape moral responsibilities. S. K. Das has observed, "Critics conveniently ignore the fact that the doctrine of oneness to which Advaita Vedānta stands pledged . . . is a task as well as a fact, is a problem as it is a possession."[55] The principal moral implication of this system of philosophy is that no discrimination can be made among human beings since all men are in reality identical with each other and with Brahman. The self in each person, taken as Self, is quite without limit. In itself the Self is pure being without any qualification. This is its real nature. It is the same Self in all persons. The body is that which divides person from person, and the body is not the Self, nor a part of the Self. The differences which are noted among people are but finite guises which vanish when a person sees from the higher point of view. To the rule that one should treat others as himself, the Advaitist adds an excellent reason: because the others are his Self! The extension of the self to include all men is one of the firmest foundations for moral behavior. This would end egoism and selfishness and man's unfeeling inhumanity to his fellows. "In one that is awakened to a knowledge of the self, virtues like kindness imply no conscious effort whatsoever. They are second nature with him."[56] Each would love his neighbor as himself, for his neighbor is his Self.

This Selfhood is a state, but it is also a process. The whole man is to be regenerated. "I am *Brahman*" is more than a hopeful anticipation of blessed unification with the Absolute. It is a process which may extend over many incarnations. Death of the body marks the passage of the soul into other stages of spiritual discipline so the soul will eventually realize its divine nature. Advaitists believe that ultimately all men will be liberated.

Another significant practical aspect of Advaita Vedānta is its attitude toward religious worship. Śaṅkara was aware that for most people worship is an important part of *sādhanā* (spiritual discipline), while an inherent part of his *sādhanā* was the breaking down of the gulf between worshipper and worshipped. This was another area in which Śaṅkara was a radical non-dualist. He regarded worship as part of the normal life of man in his state of igno-

[55] Saroj Kumar Das, *A Study of the Vedānta*, p. 339.
[56] *Naiṣkarmya-siddhi*, IV, 69.

rance, but for the enlightened man there are no such dualisms, and hence there can be no worship. Nevertheless, he realized that ceremonies, hymns, and prayers were frequently an important aspect of the spiritual progress of the individual. According to Swami Nikhilananda, "Only a highly qualified spiritual aspirant can conceive of the Impersonal Absolute and meditate on It. He alone can seek Brahman and realize It directly by meditation. For the rest the approach to Impersonal Reality lies through the Personal God. Therefore the worship of Īśvara, or the Personal God, is recommended at the beginning of spiritual life."[57] The Advaitists composed hymns such as the following one for those who were neophytes in the path of liberation:

> I bow to Thee, the Everlasting Cause of the World;
> I bow to Thee, Pure Consciousness, the Soul that sustains
> the whole universe;
> I bow to Thee, who art One without duality, who does
> bestow Liberation;
> I bow to Thee, Brahman, the all-pervading Attributeless
> Reality.[58]

Those who were more advanced in spiritual discipline were advised to consider a hymn such as the following which raises doubts about the worth of any worship:

> How can one ever invoke the All-pervading Absolute?
> How give a seat to That which is the one Support of all?
> How can one bring offerings to That whose nature is
> Pure Awareness,
> Or purify That which is ever pure?
> . . . .
> How can one circumambulate Him who is boundless in
> all directions?
> How contrive to salute Him who is One without a second?
> How can hymns be pleasing to That which the Vedas
> cannot reveal?
> How can one wave lights before the Self-luminous Lord,
> the All-pervading Reality,
> And how, as an image, can He be installed who stands
> complete within and without?

[57] Nikhilananda, *Self-knowledge*, pp. 49-50.
[58] *Ibid.*, p. 51.

> Therefore it is that perfect knowers of Brahman, always
> and under all conditions,
> Commune with the Lord through contemplating their
> total identity with Him.[59]

The intellectual discovery of the non-difference of the essential nature of man and the essential nature of *Brahman* is a joyous experience. Even the life of the common man may be filled with the radiance of universal divinity. The Advaita Vedāntist rejoices that he is a man, for only at the human level does a *jīva* have the chance of becoming free from bondage. He rejoices in his knowledge that the purpose of human life is the speeding up of the transformation of *jīvas* into their full potentiality. Life on earth is a glorious opportunity for the cosmic expansion of the self. And finally, he rejoices in the anticipation of enlightenment, for he believes that enlightenment brings the purest of joys. He looks forward until it can be said of him as was said of an enlightened man in the Upanishads: "Dear, your face shines like that of one who knows Brahman."[60] *Śānti! Śānti! Śānti!* (Peace! Peace! Peace!).

[59] *Ibid.*, pp. 52-53.
[60] *Chāndogya Upanishad*, 4. 14. 3. Radhakrishnan translation.

VII. THE SELF IN VIŚIṢṬĀDVAITA VEDĀNTA

A period of history dominated by the quest for truth is likely to be a period deficient in the pursuit of goodness and beauty. But neither the heart nor the head will long tolerate neglect. Hence a period of philosophical speculation will often be followed by a resurgence of religious devotion. In India the atheistic Sāṅkhya philosophers were succeeded by the Yoga philosophers who introduced a god into Sāṅkhya-Yoga; the *Bhagavad-Gītā* with its way of love followed the rationalistic interpretations of the Upanishads; and Rāmānuja modified the Vedānta to make room for a merciful deity whom men could worship. Rāmānuja was a philosopher of the heart. In the words of a modern Viśiṣṭādvaitist, "It [Śaṅkara's system] represents orthodox Brahmanical theology at its best and is alone called Vedānta, and no other system can compare with it in boldness, depth and subtlety of speculation. But Advaita is too little in sympathy with the wants of the human heart and the system of Rāmānuja influenced by the Bhāgavata school and the *Bhagavad Gītā* alone satisfies the needs of love." [1] Srinivasachari rejects the view that there is a Vedāntic ladder with Advaita as the top rung. This, he says, "savours of the spirit of condensation arising from the sense of superiority complex",[2] and he advises that "if it [Advaita] should satisfy the needs of philosophy and religion and the highest values of life, it should come into line with Viśiṣṭādvaita".[3] But the Advaitists counter that

[1] P. N. Srinivasachari, *The Philosophy of Viśiṣṭādvaita* (Adyar, The Adyar Library, 1946), p. xliii.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. xliv.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. xliii.

Rāmānuja was a "middle-class intellect" who "pandered to the cry of the populace".[4] Furthermore, "Rāmānuja had not the courage to ascend the height, but he remained at a lower level, gazed from there, and drew the conclusion which a man standing on such a level could draw. He could not divest himself of popular ideas to which he had been wedded, and he is therefore acclaimed as the commentator who had not overlooked the claims of the human heart." [5]

Śaṅkara and Rāmānuja were opposite types of personality. Śaṅkara was primarily intellectual; Rāmānuja, emotional. S. D. Das conjectures, "Admittedly there is some force in the contention that one is a born Śaṁkarite or a born Rāmānujist, just as one is born Platonist or a born Aristotelian." [6] Those of the Śaṅkara type find their greatest satisfactions in the life of reason; those of the Rāmānuja type find their greatest satisfactions in the life of feeling. Each has a special temptation. The Śaṅkarite is tempted to fashion a coherent system of thought even though it be a system which blights some of the cherished hopes of men. The Rāmānujite is so anxious to create a religion which will meet the longings of men that he forgets to balance truth-claims and value-claims. If a label is helpful, one might, with apologies to William James, describe the Śaṅkarite as tough-minded and the Rāmānujite as tender-hearted.

The "claims of the human heart" which molded Rāmānuja's thought were three: (1) the desire for a personal deity to whom devotees might pray expecting succor and blessings, (2) the belief that the world reached through the sense organs is a real, independent world which is in reality very much as it is sensed, and (3) the confidence that the individual self is real and is so significant that it is immortal. The last claim is the touchstone of Viśiṣṭādvaita in the minds of the common people. The doctrine of absorption of the individual self into the impersonal Brahman cannot but be regarded by the average man as involving self-

[4] Sures Chandra Chakravarti, *The Philosophy of the Upanishads* (Calcutta, University of Calcutta, 1935), p. 154.
[5] *Ibid.*, pp. 154-155.
[6] Saroj Kumar Das, *A Study of the Vedānta* (Calcutta, University of Calcutta, 1937), p. 29.

destruction. The universal fear of death is partly the fear that one's individuality will be lost in physical death. It is small comfort to be informed by a swami, "The fear of death can only be conquered when man realizes that so long as there is one life in the universe, he is living. When he can say, 'I am in everything, in everybody, I am in all lives, I am the universe', then alone comes the state of fearlessness." [7] One can easily imagine a person responding, "But I don't want to be the universe! I want to be myself!" Thibaut has written regarding the doctrine of absorption, "But although this form of doctrine has ever since Śaṅkara's time been the one most generally accepted by Brahminic students of philosophy, it has never had any wide-reaching influences on the masses of India. It is too little in sympathy with the wants of the human heart, which, after all, are not so very different in India from what they are elsewhere. Comparatively few, even in India, are those who rejoice in the idea of a universal non-personal essence in which their own individuality is to be merged and lost forever, who think it sweet 'to be wrecked on the ocean of the Infinite'. The only forms of Vedāntic philosophy which are – and can at any time have been – really popular, are those in which the *Brahman* of the Upanishads has somehow transferred itself into a being, between which and the devotee there can exists a personal relation, love and faith on the part of man, justice tempered by mercy on the part of the divinity. The only religious books of widespread influence are such as the *Rāmāyan* of *Tulsidās*, which lay no stress on the distinction between an absolute Brahman inaccessible to all human wants and sympathies, and a shadowy Lord whose very conception depends on the illusory principle of *Māyā*, but love to dwell on the delights of devotion to one all-wise and merciful ruler, who is able and willing to lend a gracious ear to the supplication of the worshipper." [8] The average man wants to commune with God, not to be swallowed up in impersonal reality.

Rāmānuja lived two centuries after Śaṅkara. He is reputed to

[7] *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda,* Vol. 2 (Mayavati, Almora, Himalayas, Advaita Ashrama, 1931), pp. 80-81.

[8] George Thibaut (translator), *The Vedānta-Sūtras with the Commentary by Śaṅkarakarya. SBE,* Vol. 34 (Oxford, The Clarendon Press, 1890), cxxvii-cxxviii.

have lived for one hundred and twenty years (1017–1137). He was a Vaiṣṇavite, that is, he was a member of the cult which worshipped God in the form of Viṣṇu. This cult had at an early date in its history developed the concept of *avatārs* (descents) as a technique for the preservation of its monotheistic tendencies. In the course of time other claimants to divinity had been absorbed into the cult as *avatārs* of God into the arena of human life. Even the Buddha has been so honored. One of the best known of these *avatārs* was Kṛṣṇa in the *Bhagavad-Gītā*. The branch of Vaiṣṇavism to which Rāmānuja belonged possessed in addition to the concept of *avatārs* two other syncretic tools: *iṣṭa-devatā*, the doctrine that the deity which one worships is a matter of personal choice; and Trimūrti, the doctrine that Brahmā, Viśnu, and Śiva are three forms of the Supreme God corresponding to the functions of creation, preservation, and destruction. Between the second and the eighth centuries A.D. the *Āḷvārs*, south Indian mystics, had composed thousands of hymns of praise and devotion to Viṣṇu. The chief end of life, they believed, was to respond with joyous gratitude to the freely offered gift of God's love. The *Āḷvārs* sang Buddhism and Jainism out of south India.

The task which Rāmānuja undertook was to amalgamate the non-duality of the Vedānta, the theism of the *Bhagavad-Gītā*, and the pious devotion of the *Āḷvārs*. This was a much more complex task than the forming of a philosophy of the Upanishads – the task of Śaṅkara. A significant difference between the two was that Śaṅkara sought to fashion a religious philosophy for the intellectual sophisticated, whereas Rāmānuja directed his efforts to the creation of a philosophical religion for the average man. Rāmānuja's work, said Müller, "assumed no doubt its greatest importance as a religious sect, as teaching people how to live rather than how to think." [9] Müller added, "extreme views like those propounded by Śaṁkara were . . . too much for the great masses of the people . . . To worship Īśvara, and to be told at the same time that Īśvara is but phenomenal, must be trying even to the most ardent of worshippers. If therefore Rāmānuja, while professing his faith in

[9] Friedrich Max Müller, *The Six Systems of Indian Philosophy* (London, Longmans, Green and Company, 1928), p. 246.

the Upanishads and his allegiance to Bādarāyana, could give back to his followers not only their own souls, but also a personal god, no wonder that his success should have been so great as it was."[10]

Both Śaṅkara and Rāmānuja looked to the same writings, but they were not objective interpreters. Both sought scriptural confirmation of conclusions already reached. Müller has written, "Dr. Thibaut therefore seems to me quite right when he says that both Śaṅkara and Rāmānuja pay often less regard to the literal sense of the words and to tradition than to their desire of forcing Bādarāyana to bear testimony to the truth of their own philosophical theories."[11] Much of the language of Rāmānuja's commentary on the *Vedānta-Sūtras* is the language of debate. The phrase "according to the views of our opponent" appears frequently in his commentary, and he leaves no doubt that the opponent he has in mind is the great Śaṅkara. Devastating criticism of Śaṅkara and his followers became a tradition in Viśiṣṭādvaita Vedānta. Veṅkaṭanātha, the most noted philosopher of the school, reached the apex of criticism in his *Śata-dūṣani* (century of refutations), which contained, as its title implied, one hundred attacks on Advaita Vedānta.

Rāmānuja began his commentary on Bādarāyana's *Vedānta-Sūtras* in a fighting mood. His anger was that of a religious man whose belief in god was endangered by the cold reasoning of a philosophical opponent. He summarized the view of Brahman held by Śaṅkara as: "Eternal, absolutely non-changing consciousness, whose nature is pure non-differentiated intelligence, free from all distinction whatever, owing to error illusorily manifests itself . . . as broken up into manifold distinctions – knowing subject, objects of knowledge, acts of knowledge."[12] Then he added his first evaluation of the Advaita Vedānta conception of *Brahman*: "The entire theory rests on a fictitious foundation of altogether hollow and vicious arguments, incapable of being stated in

[10] *Ibid.*, p. 248.
[11] *Ibid.*, p. 250.
[12] *The Vedānta-Sūtras with the Commentary of Rāmānuga*, translated by George Thibaut. *SBE*, Vol. 48 (Oxford, The Clarendon Press, 1904), I. 1. 1., p. 38.

definite logical alternatives . . . . The theory therefore must needs be rejected by all those who, through texts, perception, and the other means of knowledge – assisted by sound reasoning – have an insight into the true nature of things."[13] Rāmānuja rejected the conception of *Nirguṇa Brahman* on grounds of both reason and revelation. His strongest rational argument is that the distinction between the self and the non-self is the very condition of consciousness. Any attempt to destroy this distinction by reducing the object or the non-self to an idea of the self is futile, for consciousness or knowledge is always a knowing of something which is perceived to be different from the knower. "Those who maintain the doctrine of a substance devoid of all difference have no right to assert that this or that is a proof of such a substance, for all means of right knowledge have for their object things affected with difference."[14] And again, "All consciousness implies difference: all states of consciousness have for their object something that is marked by some difference, as appears in the case of judgments like 'I saw this'."[15] There cannot be a reality which is a consciousness with no object. Pure consciousness is pure fiction. Consciousness is a quality belonging to a substratum. It is an experience or an activity of an individual which is distinct from consciousness itself.

Speech has the power to represent objects affected with difference. It has no power to denote things devoid of difference. So if there is such a being as Śaṅkara described in his idea of *Nirguṇa Brahman*, it must be a being about which nothing can be said. Nor can *Nirguṇa Brahman* be perceived, since perception has power to perceive only those objects which are different from the perceiver, and *Nirguṇa Brahman* is held to be non-different from the perceiver. No one perceives that which is not other than the perceiver. Rāmānuja added, "Inference also is in the same case; for its object is only what is distinguished by connexion with things

[13] *Vedānta-Sūtras*, I. 1. 1. *SBE*, Vol. 48, p. 39. Throughout the rest of this chapter, unless otherwise stated, *Vedānta-Sūtras* will denote *The Vedānta-Sūtras with the Commentary of Rāmānuga* as translated by George Thibaut.
[14] *Vedānta-Sūtras*, I. 1. 1. *SBE*, Vol. 48, p. 39.
[15] *Vedānta-Sūtras*, I. 1. 1. *SBE*, Vol. 48, p. 39.

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known through perception and other means of knowledge."[16] Speech, perception, and inference do not and cannot reveal a pure being; they can only reveal objects which have differentiating characteristics. A *Brahman* without attributes cannot be talked about, perceived, or inferred.

Consciousness must be a particular attribute belonging to a conscious self. There must be a self that is conscious. Consciousness is not an independent entity. Those who maintain that there is a pure being which is pure consciousness are describing a fiction. *Brahman has* the qualities of intelligence, pure thought, and pure being; *Brahman* is not intelligence, pure thought, and pure being, as Śaṅkara claimed.

This conclusion, said Rāmānuja, is reached not only by sound arguments but also it is the view presented in the scriptures. A text such as "True knowledge, infinite is Brahman", argued Rāmānuja, does not prove a substance devoid of all difference, because "whether we take the several terms, 'True', 'Knowledge', 'Infinite', in their primary sense, *i.e.* as denoting qualities, or as denoting modes of being opposed to whatever is contrary to those qualities; in either case we must needs admit a plurality of causes for the application of those several terms to one thing."[17] The passage, "one only without a second" is not a denial of duality, said Rāmānuja; instead it is intended to mean that *Brahman* has so many powers that he has no rival. There is no other ruling principle like unto *Brahman*. If *Brahman* is really without attributes, added Rāmānuja, then *Brahman* does not have the attribute of eternity. The many texts which Śaṅkara interpreted to be denials of plurality, *e.g.*, "where there is duality as it were",[18] and "in it there is no diversity",[19] Rāmānuja regarded as denials of plurality only in the sense that they deny that the world has any other ruling principle or true Self than *Brahman*.

While Rāmānuja rejected *Nirguṇa Brahman*, the unconditioned, qualityless First Principle, he accepted *Saguṇa Brahman*, the *Brahman* with qualities. *Saguṇa Brahman* is a self which is conscious. He is "the highest Person (*purushottama*), who is essentially free from all imperfections and possesses numberless classes of auspicious qualities of unsurpassable excellence."[20] There is no "Pure Being" more real than *Saguṇa Brahman*. There is nothing outside this embodied whole – *Saguṇa Brahman*, the world, and the individual souls. Rāmānuja preferred to call *Saguṇa Brahman Īśvara* (Lord). The fundamental qualities of Īśvara are wisdom, happiness, goodness, power, and above all love. The love of God of which the *Āḷvārs* sang was according to Rāmānuja a rediscovery of that which had been found by the Upanishadic *rishis*. Rāmānuja believed that the *Śvetāśvagara Upanishad* and a few of the later Upanishads clothed the Absolute in flesh and blood. In the *Śvetāśvatara Upanishad* Rāmānuja read that the individual soul and the Ātman are different[21] and that "through the grace of the Creator he [the soul] sees the Lord and his greatness".[22] From such evidence and from evidence in the *Bhagavad-Gītā* where *Brahman* assumes the form of Arjuna's compassionate charioteer, Rāmānuja concluded that Īśvara is a kindly One who shows grace to individuals. Surely the truth of the matter here is that Rāmānuja was guided more by his sectarian religion than by objective interpretations of the Upanishads.

Rāmānuja believed that Īśvara's grace is not arbitrary. Īśvara favors those who are attached to him. He ultimately grants evil and good according to the good and evil deeds of men. His grace is conferred in accordance with the law of *karma*, claimed Rāmānuja, but *karma* in this system is not an impersonal rule of cause and effect, but an expression of Īśvara's way of acting.

Īśvara is the creator of the world. Sport or play (*līlā*) was the motive for the creation. Sport motivated not only the creation, but it also motivates the sustentation and the destruction of the world. Destruction is followed by creation, so the world will never cease to be. In passages in which Rāmānuja is stressing the compassion and love of God, he suggests that Īśvara also created the world

[16] *Vedānta-Sūtras*, I. 1. 1. *SBE*, Vol. 48, p. 43.
[17] *Vedānta-Sūtras*, I. 1. 1. *SBE*, Vol. 48, p. 79.
[18] *Bṛihad-Āraṇyaka Upanishad*, 4. 5. 15. Hume translation.
[19] *Bṛihad-Āraṇyaka Upanishad*, 4. 4. 19. Radhakrishnan translation.

[20] *Vedānta-Sūtras*, I. 1. 1. *SBE*, Vol. 48, p. 4.
[21] *Śvetāśvatara Upanishad*, 1. 6.
[22] *Śvetāśvatara Upanishad*, 3. 20. Hume translation.

out of his desire for the happiness of all sentient beings. The play motive makes more sense in Viśiṣṭādvaita than in Advaita, since a personal being acts from motives, but an impersonal being cannot be thought of as acting in this fashion.

The world is distinct from *Brahman*, but completely dependent upon *Brahman*. The material world was created by the intermingling of earth, water, and fire so that in each object all three elements are found. Prior to the creation, the material world and individual souls existed in a subtler and finer form. At creation the material elements undergo a substantial change. The individual souls do not undergo a change, hence they cannot be said to be "created". The state in which Brahman existed with the material elements and the individual souls in a purer form Rāmānuja called *Brahman in the causal state* (*kāraṇāvasthā*). This was the prior state; the state before the present one. The present state he called *Brahman in the effected state* (*kāryāvasthā*). Rāmānuja held that if the effect is called false (as it was by the Advaitists) then the cause and the effect cannot be said to be identical (as they were by the Advaitists). He rejected completely the *māyā* theory: "According to the view of our opponent, this entire world, with all its endless distinctions of Ruler, creatures ruled, and so on, is, owing to a certain defect, fictitiously superimposed upon the non-differenced, self-luminous Reality; and what constitutes that defect is beginningless Nescience, which invests the Reality, gives rise to manifold illusions, and cannot be defined either as being or non-being."[23]

If Rāmānuja's philosophy had been better known in the West, the charge that Indian philosophy is a philosophy of illusion would not have overweighed other considerations as it has. Unfortunately, the first Western philosopher to make a serious study of Indian philosophy was chiefly interested in using Hinduism to support his own metaphysics and philosophy of life, and he was able to find what he wanted within the framework of Advaita Vedānta. More recently Albert Schweitzer in his book, *Indian Thought and Its Development* (1936), gave support to the illusion theory with

[23] *Vedānta-Sūtras,* I. 1. 1. *SBE,* Vol. 48, p. 102.

his claim that European thought is predominately "world and life affirming" and Indian thought is predominately "world and life negating". Both Schopenhauer and Schweitzer might have made a fairer evaluation of Indian philosophy if they had been informed about Viśiṣṭādvaita as they were about Advaita. Even today Advaita is much better known than Viśiṣṭādvaita both in India and in the West. As one Indian philosopher has said, "In contemporary Indian philosophy, Vedānta is overweighed on the side of Advaita; and the balance will be restored only when the other systems of Vedānta, notably that of Rāmānuja, are widely known and appreciated in the west as well as in the east. A comparative study of Vedānta is essential to the understanding of Indian culture and its synthetic genius, and this can be best achieved by a knowledge of the fundamental features of Vedānta as a whole. But before this task is attempted, it is necessary that Viśiṣṭādvaita comes to its own in the world of modern Vedāntic thought as a *siddhānta* as well as synthesis."[24] Another Indian philosopher has expressed himself as follows on this crucial point: "Considering the philosophy of Śaṁkara as typical of Indian thought, Western critics have accused Hinduism of illusionism, *i.e.*, of regarding the world of experience, the world of life and activity, as unreal; and on this ground, they have urged that Hinduism can in the end provide no basis for the living of life in this world. Even if such a criticism be true of Śaṁkara's philosophy, it certainly cannot claim to be true of all Hindu philosophy. Rāmānuja, at any rate, repudiates at every turn the doctrine of the illusoriness of the material world and the finite self, and postulates that ultimate Reality is one in which the material world and the finite self find a necessary place. Nay more, he claims that the ideals by which we live – the perfections of truth, goodness and love – are rooted in the very heart of the Eternal."[25] Rāmānuja himself was so adamant on the matter of the non-illusory character of the world that he said in his commentary on *Vedānta-Sūtras* that Śaṅkara should not have written that Brahman is that omniscient, omnipotent cause from which proceed the

[24] Srinivasachari, *The Philosophy of Viśiṣṭādvaita,* pp. xlviii-xlix.
[25] Bharatan Kumarappa, *The Hindu Conception of the Deity as Culminating in Rāmānuja* (London, Luzac and Company, 1934), p. xiii.

"creation, sustenance and reabsorption" of this world.[26] Instead he should have written "Brahman is that whence proceeds the error of the origination, etc. of the world".[27] *Brahman* is the only cause of the world, affirmed Rāmānuja, and the effect is not ultimately less real than the cause.

Rāmānuja spoke of the material world and the individual souls as the body of God (*śarīra*), and he spoke of God as the soul of the world. This analogy must not be carried very far, for there was considerable discussion early in the history of Viśiṣṭādvaita about whether the notion of *śarīra* could be subsumed under a class, or whether this particular conception of body was unique. Some of the early philosophers of this school held that *śarīra* meant an entity controlled in its entirely by spirit – a mere means to the end of another. Thus insofar as a servant was controlled by a master, the servant was said to be the *śarīra* of the master. At least one point is clear: Rāmānuja held that Īśvara, the individual souls, and the physical world are both different and inseparable. This is the meaning of the term Viśiṣṭādvaita (modified non-dualism). God is immanent in the world and guides both the physsical world and souls from within.

The important Upanishadic phrase, *tat tvam asi*, received very different treatments in the hands of Śaṅkara and Rāmānuja. For Śaṅkara it meant that the individual self and the Brahman are non-different in essence. For Rāmānuja it was an assertion of the partial identity of two forms of the same substance: *Brahman* in the causal state, *i.e.*, the *Brahman* in which the world and individual selves reside in a pre-manifested state, is identical with *Brahman* in the effected state, *i.e.*, the *Brahman* in which the world and the individual selves have been manifested. *That* is *Brahman creative; thou* is *Brahman created*. Rāmānuja's own words on the phrase are these: "In texts, again, such as 'Thou art that', the co-ordination of the constituent parts is not meant to convey the idea of the absolute unity of a non-differenced substance: on the contrary, the words 'that' and 'thou' denote a *Brahman* distinguished by difference. The word 'that' refers to *Brahman* omniscient, etc.,

[26] *Vedānta-Sūtras,* I. 1. 2. *SBE,* Vol. 48, p. 156.
[27] *Vedānta-Sūtras,* I. 1. 2. *SBE,* Vol. 48, p. 161.

which had been introduced as the general topic of consideration in previous passages of the same section, such as 'It thought, may I be many'; the word 'thou', which stands in co-ordination to 'that', conveys the idea of *Brahman* in so far as having for its body the individual souls connected with non-intelligent matter."[28] There is not an absolute oneness of *that* and *thou*, as Śaṅkara thaught, rather, according to Rāmānuja, the phrase recognizes oneness in some respects and difference in other respects. Mallik has pointed out that *tat tvam asi* is a synthetic sentence, not an analytic one: "Previous to this text in the same section after the statement 'it thought may I be many' an elaborate description is given about the manifold objects. The souls are included in these manifold objects and are found to reside always in corporeal forms. From the transcient nature of these frames it might appear to the mind of Śvetaketu that the souls also are transcient like this dwelling place – the bodies. And to remove this doubt and confusion an explicit statement is made by way of a proposition in which Brahmanhood (That) is predicated of the soul (Thou). The predicate thus affirms something definite and new of the subject 'thou' in-as-much as the characteristics of knowledge, bliss, eternity, etc. belonging to the connotation of 'that', were not present in the doubting mind of Śvetaketu as included in the connotation of 'Thou' (Soul)."[29] The *thou* in the sentence stands for the class of individual selves. The sentence according to Rāmānuja means that some of the endless attributes of *Brahman* such as bliss, knowledge, and eternity are shared by souls. God and *jīvas* are qualifiedly identical.

The individual self or soul is called *jīva* or *ātman* in Viśiṣṭādvaita. The existence and nature of the *jīva* is known chiefly through introspection. Psychology in this school is founded on the philosophy of religion, therefore the self cannot be known apart from its relationships to deity. There are three kinds of *jīvas*: (1) those who have always been free, having never known bondage, (2) those now bound to bodies and the process of *samsāra*, and (3) those

[28] *Vedānta-Sūtras,* I. 1. 1. *SBE,* Vol. 48, p. 130.
[29] Girindra Narayan Mallik, *The Philosophy of Viṣṇava Religion* (Lahore, Motilal Banarsi Das, 1927), pp. 205-206.

released *jīvas* who have through self discipline obtained liberation from incarnations. Dvaita Vedāntism has a similar classification, although its list has a somber tone not usually found in Indian philosophies. According to Dvaita the three kinds of *jīvas* are: (1) migrating *jīvas* who still have the possibility of liberation, (2) eternally migrating *jīvas*, and (3) *jīvas* condemned to the everlasting miseries of hell. There is a plurality of *jīvas*. Each *jīva* has its distinct character, although all *jīvas* are alike insofar as they have consciousness for their essential nature. The self is not pure consciousness as Śaṅkara claimed, but it is a conscious subject. The self is the substratum in which qualities inhere. The self is self-revealing in that it reveals itself to itself. It is always self-manifested as *I*. "If the Self were pure consciousness then pure consciousness only, and not the quality of being a knowing subject, would present itself in the body also, which is a Not-self wrongly imagined to be a Self. The conclusion therefore remains that the Self is nothing but the knowing 'I'."[30] The self is the knower of the field of knowledge. As knower the self is always a knower of objects. A self that is not a knower would be empty of content, and knowledge without a knower would be without meaning. Knowledge must always include subject and object. As knower the self is never tainted by the *guṇas* of *prakṛti*. The body put on at birth and discarded at death is not the self nor any part of the self.

Rāmānuja described the *jīva* as an *effect* of Brahman, as the *body* of Brahman as a *mode* of *Brahman*, and as a *monad*. When Rāmānuja said that the individual self was an effect, he did not mean that it was a creation in the sense in which ether is a creation. The selves as well as the elements of the physical world existed prior to their manifestation in a pure state in *Brahman*. Both the elements of the physical world and the individual selves that are now in the manifest state have been transformed. "By a thing being an effect we mean its being due to a substance passing over into some other state; and from this point of view this self also is an effect."[31] *Effect* does not mean having been produced, for the

[30] *Vedānta-Sūtras*, I. 1. 1. *SBE*, Vol. 48, p. 72.
[31] *Vedānta-Sūtras*, II. 3. 18. *SBE*, Vol. 48, p. 541.

self is not produced; it is eternal, *i.e.*, it has neither a beginning nor an end. When the elements and the selves are transported from the unmanifested state to the manifested state, they undergo change. But the change which takes place in the elements is a substantial change, the change which takes place in the selves is a qualitative change. Specifically, the selves change from unlimited knowledge in the causal state to limited knowledge in the effected state. In the words of Rāmānuja, "The 'otherness' on which the self depends consists in the contraction and expansion of intelligence; while the change on which the origination of Ether and so on depends is a change of essential nature."[32] The term *creation*, then, as it is commonly used, can be properly applied only to the physical world.

When Rāmānuja said that the physical world and the *jīvas* were the body (*śarīra*) of Īśvara and that Īśvara was the owner of the body (*śarīrin*), he was emphasizing the intimacy that exists between the *jīvas* and *Brahman*. The material world and the individual souls are living expressions of *Brahman*. They are not illusory phantoms. *Brahman* is immanent in the world as the causal order, and he is also transcendent as a being free from evil and from all limitations. In his analysis of God as *śarīrin* and the *jīva* as *śarīra*, Rāmānuja was seizing upon what he regarded as the least satisfactory aspect of Advaita Vedānta as a religion. By making *Brahman* and the soul identical, as Śaṅkara did – or at least as Rāmānuja thought Śaṅkara did, religion became impossible. Rāmānuja believed there could be no religion except where there is an essential difference between man and God, between the one who worships and the object of his worship. As Kumarappa has said, "Rāmānuja was apparently one of the first who clearly saw that if the intense religious experience of his sect was to be considered valid, this ambiguity regarding the ultimate reality of the soul must cease. He accordingly sets himself in sharp opposition to the Advaita view that Brahman and the soul are one, and by so doing is enabled to make a distinct contribution to a consistent philo-

[32] *Vedānta-Sūtras*, II. 3. 18. *SBE*, Vol. 48, p. 541.

sophical formulation of the relation between the Deity and the soul, as revealed in religious experience."[33]

The *jīva* is said to be an inseparable attribute (*viśeṣaṇa*) of *Brahman*, a part (*amśa*) of *Brahman*, and a mode (*prakāra*) of *Brahman*. Again from Rāmānuja there is a clear statement: "The individual soul is a part of the highest Self; as the light issuing from a luminous thing such as fire or the sun is a part of that body; or as the generic characteristics of a cow or horse, and the white or black colour of things so coloured, are attributes and hence parts of the things in which those attributes inhere; or as the body is a part of an embodied thing. For by a part we understand that which constitutes one place of some thing, and hence a distinguishing attribute is a part of the thing distinguished by that attribute."[34] The finite self is a mode of the highest self (*Paramātman*). The *jīva* is a spark of the absolute light of *Brahman*. In contending that the soul is a part of *Brahman*, Rāmānuja believed that he was avoiding two errors: the error of thinking that the *jīva* is different from *Brahman*, and the error of thinking that the *jīva* is identical with *Brahman*. In either case the same result follows: no relations are possible between *jīva* and *Brahman*. The quotation above indicates that by *part* Rāmānuja did not mean a quantitative portion, since *Brahman* cannot be divided into physical pieces. He meant a qualitative part, as light is a part of a luminous body. *Part* then means a distinguishing attribute. But again an attribute must not be interpreted so that the individuality of the *jīva* is eliminated. A *jīva* is an attribute, or part, or mode of *Brahman* in that it belongs to *Brahman* and it depends upon *Brahman* for its existence, and not that it has no individuality which marks it off as a unique entity.

One can raise the question whether Rāmānuja was really a theist, for it seems most peculiar for a theist to think of man as a mode of God. Rāmānuja may have felt some of this difficulty, for he stated that the *jīva* is also a monad, a spiritual entity which has an existence of its own. A *jīva* is not a mere appearance; it

[33] Kumarappa, *The Hindu Conception of the Deity as Culminating in Rāmānuja*, pp. 249-250.
[34] *Vedānta-Sūtras*, II. 3. 45. *SBE*, Vol. 48, p. 563.

has a real existence. In answer to the question how intelligence can be both substance and attribute, Rāmānuja used again the illustration of light. Light is both an attribute of a lamp and a substance in itself. The self is a knowing subject. As a monad it should not be confused with the spiritual atoms of Leibniz, since it is not windowless in its nature. Indeed it possesses the potentiality of infinite consciousness. Srinivasachari has commented, "The Viśiṣṭādvaita view that the *jīva* or individual self is a *prakāra* of Brahman, the supreme Self who is its *prakārin*, is, on the face of it, paradoxical, because the *jīva* is also considered as a separate entity or centre of existence distinct from Brahman and having qualities of its own. It amounts to saying that the *jīva* is both a monad having an existence of its own and a mode or inseparable attribute of Brahman."[35] Advaitists have seized upon this admittedly weak point in Rāmānuja's philosophy. Rāmānuja "reveals a lack of courage in not accepting the ultimate conclusion, which his premises lead him to . . . . Rāmānuja lacked in courage of imagination, and tried to perpetuate the individual",[36] are typical Advaitist criticism. Even Thibaut, who believed that Rāmānuja was in general the more accurate interpreter of the Upanishads, acknowledged, "The Brahman of the old Upanishads from which the souls spring to enjoy individual consciousness in their waking state, and into which they sink back temporarily in the state of deep dreamless sleep and permanently in death, is certainly not represented adequately by the strictly personal Īśvara of Rāmānuja, who rules the world in wisdom and mercy."[37]

Rāmānuja also had difficulty in reconciling the free will of the *jīvas* and the unlimited power of Īśvara. He said the *jīvas* have free will, although their action is dependent upon Īśvara's permission and power. The *jīvas* are able to act freely because Īśvara allows, wishes, and aids the *jīvas* to do what they will to do. Īśvara is both the internal ruler in the *jīvas* and the external ruler of the world. Īśvara has the power to override the wills of *jīvas*, but he

[35] Srinivasachari, *The Philosophy of Viśiṣṭādvaita*, p. 299.
[36] Chakravarti, *The Philosophy of the Upanishads*, pp. 150, 258.
[37] Thibaut, *The Vedānta-Sūtras with the Commentary by Śaṅkarakarya*, p. cxxiv.

never exercises this power because the *jīvas* wish and do just what Īśvara wishes and allows!

A *jīva* is infinitely small – smaller than "the hundredth part of the point of a hair divided a hundred times".[38] Yet a *jīva* contracts or expands according to the nature of its *karma*. At the time of its liberation a *jīva* has expanded until it pervades the whole world like the rays of light from a lamp which illuminate every corner of the room. The body with which the *jīva* is associated in an incarnation is in fact two bodies. There is a gross body which is dissolved at death, and there is a subtle body, the individuating aspect of the *jīva*, which survives the deaths of the gross body and either passes into another incarnation or into liberation from bondage to the gross body.

One of the most striking differences between the Vedānta of Śaṅkara and the Vedānta of Rāmānuja is the value placed upon the individuality of the self in the two systems. The liberation of the self for Śaṅkara means the destruction of all individuality (or of the illusion of individuality); the liberation of the self for Rāmānuja means liberation from *saṃsāra*, but the individuality of the *jīva* is preserved. Rāmānuja argues, "To maintain that the consciousness of the 'I' does not persist in the state of final release is again altogether inappropriate. It in fact amounts to the doctrine – only expressed in somewhat different words – that final release is the annihilation of the Self. The 'I' is not a mere attribute of the Self so that even after its destruction the essential nature of the Self might persist – as it persists on the cessation of ignorance; but it constitutes the very nature of the Self. Such judgment as 'I know', 'Knowledge has arisen in me', show, on the one hand, that we are conscious of knowledge as a mere attribute of the Self. – Moreover, a man who suffering pain, mental or of other kind – whether such pain be real or due to error only – puts himself in relation to pain – 'I am suffering pain' – and naturally begins to reflect how he might once for all free himself from all these manifold afflictions and enjoy a state of untroubled ease; the desire of final release thus having arisen in him he at once sets to work to accomplish it. If, on the other hand, he were to realise that the

[38] *Vedānta-Sūtras,* II. 3. 23. *SBE,* Vol. 48, p. 548.

effect of such activity would be the loss of personal existence, he surely would turn away as soon as somebody began to tell him about 'release'. And the result of this would be that, in the absence of willing and qualified pupils, the whole scriptural teaching as to final release would lose its authoritative character. – Nor must you mention against this that even in the state of release there persists pure consciousness; for this by no means improves your case. No sensible person exerts himself under the influence of the idea that after he himself has perished there will remain some entity termed 'pure light!' – What constitutes the 'inward' Self thus is the 'I', the knowing subject." [39]

The way of salvation according to Rāmānuja is *bhakti* or devotion. *Bhakti* in Viśiṣṭādvaita is more than feeling; it is a special sort of knowing in which the person continues to think on Īśvara as the dearest of all. He surrenders himself to Īśvara, adores him, counts his many names, performs all the rites which are appropriate evidences of his love, practices the virtues which please Īśvara, and at last experiences the grace of Īśvara. The final emancipation from all earthly bonds comes to the devotee as a gift from Īśvara. Rāmānuja ridiculed the notion that release from bondage could be accomplished merely by knowing *Brahman* as the Universal Self: "The doctrine, again, that Nescience is put an end to by the cognition of Brahman being the Self of all can in no way be upheld; for as bondage is something real it cannot be put an end to by knowledge. How, we ask, can any one assert that bondage – which consists in the experience of pleasure and pain caused by the connexion of selves with bodies of various kind, a connexion springing from good or evil actions – is something false, unreal? And that the cessation of such bondage is to be obtained only through the grace of the highest Self pleased by the devout meditation of the worshipper, we have already explained." [40] The liberating knowledge of *Brahman* is conative as well as cognitive. Indeed *Brahman* cannot be cognized, according to Viśiṣṭādvaitists, until the individual has felt genuine love for Īśvara and has ceased from evil conduct. The moral conduct conducive to proper knowledge

[39] *Vedānta-Sūtras,* I. 1. 1. *SBE,* Vol. 48, pp. 69-70.
[40] *Vedānta-Sūtras,* I. 1. 1. *SBE,* Vol. 48, p. 145.

is fundamentally the ethics of the *Bhagavad-Gītā*. The individual must free himself from the notion that the body is the true self; he must recognize his kinship with and utter dependence upon *Brahman*; he must perform the duties binding upon him by reason of his station in life with no thought of personal gain.

The *bhakti-vidyā* which liberates is both a product of the effort of the individual and a gift of God. Īśvara may remove the impediments caused by the sins committed in previous incarnations, but only the individual can live a life in the present incarnation worthy of receiving divine benefactions. Rāmānuja never denied that the individual soul had a part in its salvation. But the followers of Rāmānuja split on this point. The northern school affirmed and the southern school denied that the soul contributes to liberation. The northern school was called the *Monkey School* (*Markaṭa Nyāya*) because it taught that the soul must assist in its own salvation, as a baby monkey is transported by clinging to its mother. The southern school was called the *Cat School (Nārjāra Nyāya)* because it held that the soul does not assist in its own salvation, as a kitten is passive when carried by its mother.

Viśiṣṭādvaita Vedāntists hold that emancipation can be attained by any person, male or female, Brahmin or outcaste. A person need not renounce the world and become a *sannyāsi*. He can in any stage of life by fulfilling his normal responsibilities and by unceasing devotion to Īśvara so place himself in Īśvara's mercy that he will be liberated.

Īśvara desires that all his sentient creatures be happy both in the state of bondage and in the state of enlightenment. "What the Lord himself aims at is ever to increase happiness to the highest degree, and to this end it is instrumental that he should reprove and reject the infinite and intolerable mass of sins which accumulates in the course of beginning and endless aeons, and thus check the tendency on the part of individual beings to transgress his laws."[41] In liberation the consciousness of the *jīvā* expands to infinite proportions, its wishes are never unfulfilled, its pleasures are unmixed with sufferings. The individual self experiences perfect bliss through an endless realization of *Brahman*.

[41] *Vedānta-Sūtras*, I. 2. 12. *SBE*, Vol. 48, pp. 488-489.

VIII. THE SELF IN AUROBINDO

Creative philosophy halted in India after Rāmānuja. Some philosophers, like Madhva (1197–1276), wrote important commentaries on Upanishads and *sūtras*, but most philosophers from Rāmānuja to the present century merely wrangled over the same texts and the same problems with few new insights. India's political fortunes during these centuries turned many minds away from the eternal verities to the pressing problems of survival under foreign rule. The cultural unity of India was destroyed with the establishment of Muslim rule by the Delhi sultanate in 1206. The Moguls invaded India in 1524, defeated the Delhi forces at the battle of Panipat in 1526, and dominated India until the nineteenth century. The English East India Company had been founded in 1600, but it was not until the 1840's that England ruled India. A revival of Hinduism was coincident with the rise of British rule. Ram Mohan Roy (1772–1833), the morning star of the Hindu renaissance, was favorably impressed by European culture and founded the Brāhmo Samāj on lines strikingly similar to eighteenth century European deism. Swami Dayananda (1824–1883) founded the Ārya Samāj as a dynamic form of Hinduism which reached back to the Vedas for its source of ideas and practices. Ramakrishna (1836–1886), an untutored mystic, taught and lived a Hinduism which was a synthesis of many religions. His disciple, Swami Vivekananda (1863–1902) brought the message of Ramakrishna to Europe and the United States. Rabindranath Tagore (1861–1941) charmed the West and enriched India's cultural contribution to mankind with his stories, plays, poems, and songs. Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948), a frail mystic, translated

Hinduism into a life of action and won the sympathies of most of the peoples of the world in his long struggle to win India's independence from the British by non-violent means. Ramana Maharshi (1879–1950) took no part in the resistance movement, but reminded Indians that man's chief responsibility is to know himself. Most of his life was spent in meditation on the holy hill of Arunachala.

In the twentieth century there have been a number of excellent Indian teachers who have revitalized Indian philosophy by relating it to Western philosophy. Among these are Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, K. C. Bhattacharyya, A. R. Wadia, Dhirendramohan Datta, P. T. Raju, and N. A. Nikam. The outstanding creative Indian philosopher of the first half of the twentieth century was Aurobindo Ghose (1872–1950), a philosophical mystic, who received a classical Western education in England, helped organize resistance movements against the British shortly after his return to India, suffered imprisonment for one year, and finally established his *āśrama* at Pondicherry where he wrote and taught his interpretation of the Vedic message. In Aurobindo the wisdom of Vedas and Upanishads comes alive in a form which optimistically affirms the reality and value of this world and the individual self. One of his interpreters reveals the zeal of a disciple, and yet makes a point shared by some external students of Indian philosophy, when he states regarding Aurobindo's best book, "We may say that if the bridge of thoughts and sighs which spans the history of Aryan culture, as it has evolved so far, has its first arch in the Vedas, it has its last in Sri Aurobindo's *The Life Divine*."[1] To call Aurobindo's work the "last" in Indian philosophical tradition should not be interpreted to mean that Indian philosophy will cease to develop. Such an idea would violate the dynamic attitude of Aurobindo himself.

Aurobindo Ghose was born on August 15, 1872. He was the third son of Dr. K. D. Ghose, a physician of Hooghly, West Bengal, whose English education had anglicized him in customs, concepts, and ideals. After having sent young Aurobindo to the

[1] S. K. Maitra, *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Sri Aurobindo* (Benares, Benares Hindu University, 1941), p. 108.

Loretto Convent School at Darjeeling, Dr. Ghose arranged with the Drewett family of Manchester to take Aurobindo into their home and to see that he received a completely English education, and that he not be allowed to make the acquaintance of any Indian or undergo any Indian influence. After five years of instruction in the home by Mr. Drewett, the young boy, now twelve years of age, was sent to St. Paul's school in London, and then to Cambridge University where he took the Classical Tripos and passed high in the first class of the examination. In January 1893 at age twenty-one he returned to India well grounded in Greek, Latin, and French with lesser mastery of Hebrew, Italian, German, and Spanish. While at Cambridge he had made an effort to learn Bengali and Sanskrit, but for the most part it is not an exaggeration to state that Aurobindo Ghose at age twenty-one was ignorant of his native country, language, religion, and customs. One item in his Cambridge studies – of particular interest in view of the topic of this essay – is the record that he read the Max Müller edition of *The Sacred Books of the East* while in the university and that he was especially impressed by the Upanishadic concept of the self. From 1893 to 1906 Aurobindo lived at Baroda where he joined the Baroda State Service. He worked for a time in minor political offices and also taught English at Baroda College. His interest in the liberation of India and his cultivated love for Bengal led him to identify himself with Bengali revolutionary movements. In 1906 he resigned his position at Baroda in order to move to Calcutta where he assumed leadership in various rebellion organizations and wrote regularly for the *Bande Mataram*, a nationalistic daily newspaper. The Government arrested Aurobindo and some of his colleagues on charges of sedition on May 2, 1908. Aurobindo was held in jail until May 5, 1909. Aurobindo was acquitted, although two of his companions were hanged. He remained in Calcutta for another year to continue the work of the resistance movement. However, during his year in jail he had engaged in Yoga practices which had changed his outlook on the mission of his life. In February 1910 he left Calcutta to take refuge in Pondicherry, a small French holding below Madras, where he founded an *āśrama*, later to be called the Sri Aurobindo Interna-

tional University Centre. The British were so suspicious of this "dangerous revolutionary" that they kept the *āśrama* under strict surveillance until 1937, and once made a search of the buildings on the supposition that bombs were being made there. The reason for shifting from leadership of activities of overt rebellion to quiet scholarly studies was given by Aurobindo in a press interview in 1917: "India possesses in its past, a little rusty and out of use, the key to the progress of humanity. It is to this side that I am now turning my energies, rather than towards mediocre politics. Hence the reason for my withdrawal. I believe the necessity for *tapasya* (a life of meditation and concentration) in silence for inner illumination and self-knowledge and for the unloosing of spiritual energies. Our ancestors used these means under different forms; for they are the best for becoming an efficient worker in the great hours of the world."[2]

The forty years of his "retreat" were not years of unconcern for the liberation of India. In his Independence Day Declaration of August 15, 1947 Aurobindo, after pointing out that August 15 was both the date of his birth and the date of the birth of free India, listed five dreams which he hoped to see fulfilled in his lifetime, and which he believed were on the way to achievement[3]: First, the dream of "a revolutionary movement which would create a free and united India". Second, the dream for "the resurgence and liberation of the peoples of Asia and her return to her great role in the progress of human civilisation". Third, the dream of "a world-union forming the outer basis of a fairer, brighter and nobler life for all mankind". Fourth, the dream of an increasing resort not only to India's spiritual teachings, but to her physic and spiritual practice.[4] Fifth, the dream of "a step in evolution which

[2] Sisirkumar Mitra, *The Liberator* (Delhi, Jaico Publishing Company, 1954), p. 163.

[3] Sisirkumar Mitra, *The Liberator*, pp. 188-190.

[4] By "India's spiritual teachings" Aurobindo meant the following: "India's central conception is that of the Eternal, the Spirit here incased in matter, involved and immanent in it and evolving on the material plane by rebirth of the individual up the scale of being till in mental man it enters the world of ideas and realms of conscious mortality, dharma. ... It is her founding of life upon this exalted conception and her urge towards the spiritual and the eternal that constitute the distinct value of her civilisation.

would raise man to a higher and larger consciousness and begin the solution of the problems which have perplexed and vexed him since he first began to think and to dream of individual perfection and a perfect society".

At Pondicherry Aurobindo wrote his philosophy in many tomes, in poetry, and in articles in *Arya*, a quarterly which he published from 1914 to 1921. He wrote for the most part in English, a beautiful flowery, almost Victorian English. Rarely can a philosopher write his philosophy in a form which has genuine literary merit, but Aurobindo had that ability.

Before turning to an examination of the philosophy of Aurobindo with particular attention to the idea of the self, some observations should be made of the style of his writing. One of the first impressions one has upon reading Aurobindo is the excellence of his word choice. He had an impressive vocabulary which sometimes stands in the way of clarity, since he was prone to select the unusual, the uncommon, and even the obsolete word. He used interchangeably words which actually have significant distinctions, such as the prefixes supra- and super-. The wealth of terms for the *Brahman* is amazing: Absolute; Eternal; God, Sachchidananda; Divine-Being; Divine-Existence, Divine-Consciousness, and Divine-Delight-in-Being; Universal Energy; Reality; Pure Existence; Being; Superconscience; Supraconscience; Transcendence; the Transcendent; Nature; the Supreme the Indefinable; Divine Self; the Divine; Spirit-Substance; Ishwara-Shakti; etc. Then there are the parallelisms of words, phrases, sentences, and ideas. Some of the words seem to be efforts to gild the lily. Synonyms are piled upon synonyms, creating sentences far too long for comfortable reading. One sentence in *The Live Divine* contains over three hundred and fifty words! The parallelisms of phrases and sentences often are reminiscent of the parallelisms in the Psalms of the Old Testament, but they lose their quaint appeal when they result in books of more than one thousand pages. Certain ideas,

And it is her fidelity, with whatever human shortcomings, to this highest ideal, that has made her people a nation apart in the human world." Sri Aurobindo, *The Foundation of Indian Culture* (New York, The Greystone Press, 1953), pp. 4, 5.

such as the idea that the world is fundamentally a single reality manifested in three forms or stages, are affirmed scores of times. Irregularities in punctuation sometimes make comprehension difficult; for example, the colon and the semicolon are used interchangeably. Another difficulty is found in the fact that he is not consistent in the reification of certain key concepts by the use of initial capitals and the indefinite article "the"; for example, he uses "the Ignorance" and "ignorance" in some passages with the same denotation.

Turning from style of writing to style of thought, one is not clear to whom Aurobindo was writing. When he illustrated with the hypothetical John Smith, one can be certain that he was writing for a Western audience; but when he introduced the numerical unit the lakh, as he does in the same book, it is obvious that he was writing for an Indian audience. Latin, Greek, and Sanskrit words appear in his writing. He seemed to prefer the Sanskrit *ātman* to the Latin *anima*, although he used both; on the other hand he usually used the Greek *gnosis* in preference to the Sanskrit *vijñāna*, although Chapter XXII of Part Two of *The Synthesis of Yoga* is entitled "Vijanana or Gnosis". His logical form is also puzzling. One can scarcely avoid the conclusion that his logical expressions are sometimes screens for affirmations. For example, after pages of categorical statements, sentences may appear beginning with "If this is accepted . . ." or "If it is that . . ." or "If our analysis is correct . . .", yet later in the same chapter these conditional statements become non-conditional postulates to establish other ideas!

Śaṅkara and Aurobindo are quite different in the manner of presentation. Śaṅkara regarded himself as presenting the essential message of the Upanishads, and he made his presentaton in line-by-line commentaries of *śruti* and *smriti* writings. Aurobindo also believed that he was presenting the essential message of the Upanishads, but he presented the ancient truths in his own categories. In *The Life Divine* he rarely quotes from the Upanishads, other than the brief quotations at the head of each chapter. Indeed, he rarely quotes from any source. He was obviously influenced by Plato, Aristotle, Plotinus, Nietzsche, Darwin, and S. Alexander,

but he does not give them credit for he borrowed. He mentions Darwinism, but not Darwin. At least twice in *The Life Divine* he refers to the botanical research of the Bengali scientist, J. C. Bose, but only as the work of "an Indian scientist".[5] Aurobindo treated himself with the same impersonal tone. There are no autobiographical references in *The Life Divine* and *The Synthesis of Yoga*. The only variation from the lofty abstractions is a rare illustration chosen from Indian philosophical literature or Indian folklore.

Aurobindo's two outstanding works are *The Life Divine* and *The Synthesis of Yoga*. The former deals largely with his theory of reality; the latter is a volume on the practical psychology of salvation. These two volumes are the chief primary sources for this study.

Aurobindo took very seriously the orthodox Hindu claim that the Vedic writings are *śruti*. Hence, he by-passed the *sūtras* of Bādarāyaṇa and the commentaries of Śaṅkara, Rāmānuja, Madhva, and other *āchāryas* (spiritual teachers)and returned to the fountainhead of Indian wisdom. He did not identify himself with any of the classical systems of philosophy, but accepted the parts of any system which he considered to be correct interpretations of the teachings of the *Rig Veda* and the Upanishads, and he did not hesitate to reject any doctrine of any system which he believed to be contrary to Vedic thought. Aurobindo held there is a core of wisdom in the Vedic writings which is the eternal wisdom of mankind, yet he did not present this core in a pedantic fashion, marshalling proof texts to support his claims; rather he wrote as if he were himself a Vedic *rishi* speaking from the depths of his own experience a message which was also the message of the Upanishads. A Westerner might say that he spoke as one having authority. This was the opinion of India's greatest modern poet, Rabindranath Tagore, who in 1907 called Aurobindo "the voice incarnate of India's soul", and in 1928 after visiting Aurobindo wrote, "At the very first I could realise that he had been seeking for the soul and had gained it, and through his long process of realisation had accumulated within him a silent power of inspiration . . . .

[5] *The Life Divine* (New York, The Greystone Press, 1949), pp. 82, 165.

I felt that the utterance of the ancient Hindu Rishi spoke from him of that equanimity which gives the human soul its freedom of entrance into the All. I said to him, 'You have the Word and we are waiting to accept it from you. India will speak through your voice'."[6]

An attempt to understand any part of Aurobindo's philosophy must grasp the part in the framework of the whole, for Aurobindo's philosophy, as he informs his readers over and over again, is integral. This effort to grasp Aurobindo's conception of the self begins with a consideration of the *Brahman*, then moves to the universe as the involution or manifestation of *Brahman*, and then turns to man's unique role in the movement back to *Brahman*. The concept of the self will be analyzed in all three parts of this study of Aurobindo, since *Brahman* is the Self of selves, the universe evolves the human self, and man is essentially a self or spirit associated with a body, a vital being, and a mind.

Aurobindo believes there are three propositions to which the general reason and consciousness of mankind bear witness: first, there is an omnipresent Divinity; second, all things are ordered and governed by this Divinity; third, this Divinity and the world reality are very different, so different that man must draw away from one to reach the other.[7] The third basic belief of mankind is the source of the disharmony which man comonly postulates in his religions: the dualities of good and evil, of spirit and flesh, and of God and the devil. The world becomes a vale of tears, a sin-dominated region, a source of temptation from the good life for man, and a state of affairs to be resisted and overcome. Religions both in the East and in the West turn to world-rejection, self-denial, and even body abuse in the resulting warfare between devotion to the gods and attention to the needs arising from man's physical life. The Advaitins resolve the conflict by denying the reality of the world. The world for them becomes an illusion, and man must learn to turn away from this illusion to the supreme Reality.

[6] *The Modern Review* (July, 1928). Also in Sisirkumar Mitra, *The Liberator,* p. 176.
[7] *The Life Divine,* pp. 358-359.

The first truth about the *Brahman* is that it is one and cannot be divided into *Brahman* and *non-Brahman*, or Self and non-Self, or reality and *māyā*, contends Aurobindo.[8] This essential oneness, Aurobindo finds in the early Upanishads, but not in the classical systems of Indian philosophy. The *Brahman* is the One besides which there is nothing else – "a featureless oneness beyond all relation".[9] It is one because it is infinite; there is nothing else by which it could be limited. And since nothing can limit it, it is absolutely, infinitely, and eternally one – a oneness in contradistinction to multiplicity, the absolute first principle. But Aurobindo adds that the *Brahman* is also "one . . . in the very multiplicity of the cosmic existence. Aware of the works of the dividing mind but not itself limited by it, It finds its oneness as easily in the many, in relations, in becoming as in any withdrawal from the many, from relations, from becoming."[10] The *Brahman* is also one as the sum of the many, as the synthetic operation upon parts, as the unity of the manifold. *Brahman* is the relationless, but *Brahman* is also that to which all is related. This dual oneness of *Brahman* is clearly stated by Aurobindo in these words: "The Being is one, but this oneness is infinite and contains in itself an infinite plurality or multiplicity of itself: the One is the All; it is not only an essential Existence, but an all-Existence. The infinite multiplicity of the One and the eternal unity of the Many are the two realities or aspects of one reality on which the manifestation is founded."[11]

Brahman cannot exclude the many from itself, for to do so would make the many not exist at all. Participating in becoming does not deny the *Brahman's* own being, but rather exhibits one of its powers: "The power of self-limitation for a particular working, instead of being incompatible with the absolute conscious-force of that Being, is precisely one of the powers we should expect to exist among the manifold energies of the Infinite."[12] The *Brahman* is not actually limited by putting forth a cosmos of rela-

[8] *The Life Divine,* p. 31.
[9] *The Life Divine,* p. 572.
[10] *The Life Divine,* p. 572.
[11] *The Life Divine,* p. 589.
[12] *The Life Divine,* p. 530.

tions. The creation of the world is part of the complete self-manifestation of all that *Brahman* is. Creation is the natural play (*līlā*) of the Divine Spirit's self-delight (*ānanda*). *Brahman* "does not create in obedience to any troubled passion of desire",[13] since "desire is the result of incompleteness, of insufficiency".[14] Aurobindo compares *Brahman's* relation to the world to that of an actor who loses his identity as he plays his parts.[15] *Brahman* is not a unity exclusive of the power of multiplicity, nor is *Brahman* a sum of all things. *Brahman* is "That which is all things and more".[16]

The plus factor of the *Brahman* is that which vitiates all man's efforts to know the *Brahman.* Man, grasping one side of a truth, concludes that he knows all this truth and can act upon it. Equally in error are those who perceive the dichotomies and miss the unity and those who conceive the unity and miss the dichotomies. The first error is made by the Buddhists, the second by the Advaita Vedāntists. Aurobindo's basic disagreement with the Advaitins is this: "The absolutist view of reality, consciousness and knowledge is founded on one side of the earliest Vedantic thought, but it is not the whole of that thinking. In the Upanishads, in the inspired scripture of the most ancient Vedanta, we find the affirmation of the Absolute, the experience-concept of the utter and ineffable Transcendence; but we find also, not in contradiction to it but as its corollary, an affirmation of the cosmic Divinity, an experience-concept of the cosmic Self and the becoming of Brahman in the universe. Equally, we find the affirmation of the Divine Reality in the individual: this too is an experience-concept; it is seized upon not as an appearance, but as an actual becoming. In place of a sole supreme exclusive affirmation negating all else than the transcendent Absolute we find a comprehensive affirmation carried to its farthest conclusion: this concept of Reality and of Knowledge enveloping in one view the cosmic and the Absolute coincides fundamentally with our own; for it implies that the Ignorance too is a half-veiled part of the Knowledge and world-knowledge a part

13 *The Synthesis of Yoga* (Pondicherry, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1957), p. 801.
14 *The Life Divine,* p. 686.
15 *The Life Divine,* pp. 523-524.
16 *The Life Divine,* p. 307.

of self-knowledge."[17] Aurobindo rejects the Advaitin view of the *Brahman* because it presents but one side of the *Brahman* and hence is not faithful to the Upanishadic presentation. Such people, says Aurobindo in one of his rare illustrations, are like the disciple who thought of himself as the *Brahman* and refused to obey the warning of an elephant driver to step out of the path of an elephant. The elephant seized the man and removed him from the path. " 'You are no doubt the Brahman', said the master to his bewildered disciple, 'but why did you not obey the driver Brahman and get out of the path of the elephant Brahman?' "[18] Those who think of themselves as the *Brahman* must widen their perspective to realize that *Brahman* reveals himself in three ways: "within ourselves, above our plane, around us in the universe",[19] or, as Aurobindo says elsewhere, "the supracosmic Existence, the cosmic Spirit and the individual Self in the Many".[20]

The human mind is in difficulty because it must hold that none of the things that are said about the *Brahman* is true and also that all of the things that are said about the *Brahman* are true. *Brahman* is both *nēti, nēti* (not this, not this) and *iti, iti* (this, this). The conclusion to which man is driven is that the *Brahman* is indefiniable and inconceivable by finite and defining minds. *Brahman* is the Unknowable, beyond all positive conceptions, yet there is a spiritual knowledge, and occult consciousness, a knowledge by identity which can seize Reality in its fundamental aspects and its manifested powers. To him who has eyes to see and ears to hear the *Brahman* is grasped by the most immediate of experiences. This follows from Aurobindo's rejection of the usual dualisms of religion in his integral Brahman, integral cosmos, and integral yoga. To conceive of *Brahman* as Being (*Sat*) leads to the notion of Non-Being (*Asat*), and finally to the conception of *Sat-Asat* as the last antimony on the way to the knowing of the Unknowable. Man must beware lest he translate rigidly his experience-concept of *Brahman* into terms of his relative experience.

17 *The Life Divine,* p. 567.
18 *The Life Divine,* p. 301.
19 *The Synthesis of Yoga,* p. 679.
20 *The Life Divine,* p. 589.

When the Upanishads state that Non-Being is the source of Being, this must not be taken to mean that there is something named "Non-Being" which is the source of all being, but rather that there is Something beyond all positive conception, and that to call it "Non-Being" is merely to indicate that it cannot be fully denoted by "Being".

Another problem in understanding Aurobindo's conception of the *Brahman* arises from the fact that he uses both personal and impersonal terms to designate the *Brahman*. This is not carelessness, for Aurobindo contends, "This Divine Being, Sachchidananda is at once impersonal and personal: it is an Existence and the origin and foundation of all truths, forces, powers, existences, but it is also the one transcendent Conscious Being and the All-Person of whom all conscious beings are the selves and the personalities; for He is their highest Self and the universal indwelling Presence."[21] Aurobindo accepts the dualistic and theistic views of *Brahman*, such as that of Rāmānuja, which affirm the real and separate existence of God and the human soul, but he holds that this view is inadequate if it denies the essential capacity for complete oneness, since the soul in the universe can raise its nature to the Divine Existence (*Sach*), its consciousness into Divine Consciousness (*Chid*), and its delight of being into Divine Delight of Being (*Ānanda*). He accepts the pantheistic identifications of the Divine and the universe, since all that is the *Brahman*; but he holds that pantheism is inadequate because it stops short of the whole truth and omits the supracosmic Reality. Theism and pantheism are true accounts of the nature of the *Brahman*, but neither is the whole truth. Both can be true in the context of a larger truth: the truth of the *Brahman* that is personal and more than personal, that is the universe and more than the universe.

In similar fashion Aurobindo rejects the Advaitists' claim that there are two *Brahmans*: a silent and an active Brahman, a quiescent and a creative Reality, *Nirguṇa* and *Saguṇa*. There are not two *Brahmans*, he says, but one *Brahman* with two aspects. The passive *Brahman* is *Brahman* focusing its being in self-absorbing concentration of its energy; the active *Brahman* is *Brahman* releasing its energy into mobility. One might suppose that the active *Brahman* and the passive *Brahman* were *Brahman* acting in different fashions in different stages of cosmic evolution, but this Aurobindo will not allow. *Brahman*, he says, is not "an eternal passivity of immobile Being nor an eternal activity of Being in movement, nor is It an alternation in Time between these two things."[22] It is only from the limitations of the human point of view that we conceive *Brahman* passing alternately from activity to passivity, as from waking to sleep, since that is the way we move from partial activity to partial passivity, but "Integral Brahman possesses both the passivity and the activity simultaneously".[23]

[21] *The Life Divine*, p. 590.

Whereas Śaṅkara disparaged the physical world, since it was for him an illusion, and knowledge of the sense world, since it was a lower form of knowledge scarcely deserving the label of knowledge, Aurobindo regarded the physical world of essential value, since it was for him the progressive self-manifestation of the *Brahman* in time, and knowledge of this world, which he often called "knowledge of the Becoming", he felt was an ignorance only because man dwells imprisoned in it. Śaṅkara was unable to give a satisfactory apology for the existence of the world, for try as he might he could not dispell the notion that the existence of the world was in some way a fall from reality and value into irreality and disvalue. This was not the case for Aurobindo. The integral affirmation is that *Brahman* in creation does not lose its absolute purity, but realizes thereby its possibilities: "An infinite, indivisible existence all-blissful in its pure self-consciousness moves out of its fundamental purity into the varied play of Force that is consciousness, into the movement of Prakriti which is the play of Maya."[24] If one asks why *Brahman* delights in such action, the answer is that "all possibilities are inherent in Its infinity and that the delight of existence – in its mutable becoming, not in its immutable being, – lies precisely in the variable realisation of its possibilities".[25] Elsewhere Aurobindo describes the creation of the

[22] *The Life Divine*, p. 513.
[23] *The Life Divine*, p. 514.
[24] *The Life Divine*, p. 102.
[25] *The Life Divine*, p. 103.

world in terms of *Brahman's* movement of self-knowledge: "It is to find himself in the apparent opposites of his being and his nature that Sachchidananda descends into the material Nescience and puts on its phenomenal ignorance as a superficial mask in which he hides himself from his own conscious energy, leaving it self-forgetful and absorbed in its works and forms."[26]

Śaṅkara believed that the Upanishads taught the reality of *Brahman* and the unreality of the world of sense experience. Thus arose his doctrine of *māyā*. The implications of the doctrine of *māyā* for the self are important, for if the world is unreal, how can a real self be related to it; and if the self is an essential part of the illusory world, what meaning is there in the liberation of an unreal soul? Aurobindo challenges the doctrine of *māyā* both as an interpretation of the teachings of the Upanishads and as a description of the world. He believes that both *Brahman* and the world are real, and, furthermore, that this is the Vedic doctrine: "The pure existent is then a fact and no mere concept; it is the fundamental reality. But, let us hasten to add, the movement, the energy, the becoming are also a fact, also a reality. The supreme intuition and its corresponding experience may correct the other, may go beyond, may suspend, but do not abolish it. We have therefore two fundamental facts of pure existence and of world-existence, a fact of Being, a fact of Becoming. To deny one or the other is easy; to recognise the facts of consciousness and find out their relation is the true and fruitful wisdom."[27] If the universe is a phenomenon, it is the phenomenon of *Brahman*. All is *Brahman*, so the manifestation and that which is manifested must be fundamentally the same: "If the Reality alone exists and all is the Reality, the world also cannot be excluded from that Reality; the universe is real."[28]

Aurobindo considered Śaṅkara's doctrine of *māyā* an "escape" which "cuts the knot of the world problem". But it is no solution, for it creates more difficulties than it solves and renders the problem of existence in the world far more insoluble.[29] The theory of

[26] *The Life Divine*, p. 527.
[27] *The Life Divine*, p. 74.
[28] *The Life Divine*, p. 416.
[29] *The Life Divine*, pp. 418-419.

māyā, charged Aurobindo, divides the unified Reality, postulates opposing forces, and then tries to put them together: Śaṅkara has "erected two opposite powers, Brahman incapable of illusion and self-illusive Maya, and pitchforked them into an impossible unity".[30] Śaṅkara and his followers have not grasped the fundamental principle of monism. Illusionism, either of the Buddhist or the Advaitist varieties, is antithetical to the integral philosophy. Whereas in the Upanishads *Brahman* is described as That which being known all is known, in the solution of the illusionists *Brahman* is "That, which being known, all becomes unreal and an incomprehensible mystery".[31] Furthermore, if the world is an illusion and if the individual self is an illusion, then existence in the world is itself an illusion, and what sense can individual salvation have in such a situation? "Therefore we arrive at the escape of an illusory non-existent soul from an illusory non-existent bondage in an illusory non-existent world as the supreme good which that non-existent soul has to pursue!"[32] At least Rāmānuja's system has the merit of accepting the fact of "unity in difference", although this merely states the fact and leaves the difficulty of the fact unsolved. Rāmānuja never said how it happens that that which belongs to the unity of *Brahman* came to be separated from *Brahman*.[33]

Aurobindo did not give up the concept of *māyā*.[34] For him the *māyā* of *Brahman* is "the magic and the logic" of a One which is capable of infinite variability. The world is the masked form of *Brahman*; it is the eternal *Brahman* manifested in time. Man in his ignorance sees the world as reality, or else as only an illusion; man in his wisdom discovers the world to be other than mere phantasm or hallucination – it is the *Brahman* veiled. When the Becoming is accepted freely as the Divine that it actually is, morality is invaded with an immortal beatitude, and men become lumi-

[30] *The Life Divine*, p. 506.
[31] *The Life Divine*, p. 421.
[32] *The Life Divine*, p. 39.
[33] *The Life Divine*, p. 506.
[34] See Benoy Gopal Ray, "Shri Aurobindo's Refutation of Maya-Vada", *Darshana*, Vol. I, No. 2 (April, 1961), pp. 94-104.

nous centers of the Divine's conscious self-expression.[35] *Māyā* originally meant practical knowledge or skill, although later it came to mean cunning, fraud, or illusion. The world may be thought of as *māyā* in the sense of illusion because the world is not the essential truth of *Brahman*. In its manifestation as the world the *Brahman* appears to be a class of opposing forces, a mass of problems and mysteries, an unreal dream. However, the *māyā* character of the world, according to Aurobindo, arises not so much from the fact that the world is *Brahman's* manifestation as from the nature of the mind of man. Man sees only a part of the manifestation and assumes that the part is the whole: "Our consciousness sees a part and parts only of the Manifestation, – if manifestation it be, – and treats it or them as if they were separate entities; all our illusions and errors arise from a limited separative awareness which creates unrealities or misconceives the Real." [36] The theory of *māyā* arises because mind is not sufficient to explain existence. Mind is an instrument for acquiring relative knowledge. Mind constantly errs in trying to be an instrument of omniscience. "Mind is that which does not know, which tries to know and which never knows except as in a glass darkly." [37] For Aurobindo the nature of mind as an imperfect consciousness capable of ignorance and partial knowledge is sufficient explanation for the *māyā* character of man's experience of the world. Man's waking experience of the universe is not a reality, but "a transcript of reality, a series of collection of symbol images".[38]

So there is no need to bring in an original power of illusion to account for the admittedly illusory aspects of man's experience-concept of the world. There is illusion in the world, but it is not located where the Advaita Vedāntists suppose it is. Whereas the Advaitists and some Buddhists arrived at "a universal Illusionism", Aurobindo reached "a universal Realism . . . a real universe reposing on a Reality at once universal and transcendent or absolute".[39] Totality is real from top to bottom, from Pure Being to

[35] *The Life Divine*, p. 41.
[36] *The Life Divine*, p. 430.
[37] *The Life Divine*, p. 110.
[38] *The Life Divine*, p. 384.
[39] *The Life Divine*, p. 374.

Matter. The various planes of being are as it were a ladder plunging down from the heights of an absolute supracosmic Spirit into lowest Matter – perhaps even into planes below Matter,[40] although Aurobindo usually assumes that Matter is the lowest manifestation of the *Brahman*. Aurobindo leaves open the possibility of planes of being higher than Pure Existence, Pure Consciousness, and Pure Delight in Being,[41] although again he usually assumes that these three exhaust the planes of higher being.

Spirit and Matter are often considered to be opposing forces. In the Sāṅkhya system *puruṣa*, the passively luminous soul, is opposed to *prakṛti*, the mechanically active energy, When this vast practical difference between Spirit and Matter is interpreted in terms of conflict, two negations are likely to follow: "the materialist denial" and "the refusal of the ascetic".[42] Men either deny God or turn from Nature. Such reactions are understandable, since the material life seems in so many ways to be the negation of all spirituality, that the repudiation of the material life appears to be a short cut to spirituality. Aurobindo claimed that materialism is asserted in the West as the sole truth and the only life; whereas in India spirituality is the whole truth and value. Consequently, said Aurobindo, the West has a "bankruptcy of Spirit" and India a "bankruptcy of Life". India must integrate Matter into the spiritual life,[43] and the West must learn of Spirit from India.[44] The time

[40] *The Synthesis of Yoga*, p. 521.
[41] *The Life Divine*, p. 682.
[42] *The Life Divine*, pp. 8, 18.
[43] *The Synthesis of Yoga*, p. 29.
[44] Aurobindo in a booklet entitled *Bhayani Mandir* written in the early days of his participation in the resistance movement, set forth his plans for an education for Indian boys. In this booklet he wrote, "India cannot perish, our race cannot become extinct, because among all the divisions of mankind it is to India that is reserved the highest and the most splendid destiny, the most essential to the future of the human race. It is she who must send forth from herself the future religion of the entire world, the Eternal Religion which is to harmonise all religion, science and philosophies, and make mankind one soul." India, he added, must "Aryanise the world". Sisirkumar Mitra, *The Liberator*, p. 49. See Troy Wilson Organ, "Spirituality – Indian and American", *The Philosophical Quarterly* of The Indian Institute of Philosophy (1960), pp. 243-248 for another point of view on this issue.

is now ripe, he said, for a new affirmation in thought and a new self-fulfilment in an integral experience for all mankind. Rationalistic materialisms have swept away the premature and ill-conceived compromises of the material and the spiritual, and modern science is moving toward a monism consistent with multiplicity. Here Aurobindo seemed to be thinking of modern physicists who have propounded theories of broad inclusion. He correlated the work of modern scientists with a passage from the Upanishads: "The one controller of the inactive many, Who makes the one seed manifold."[45] The integral philosophy holds that there is no sharp distinction between Spirit and Matter: Matter is the basis, Spirit is the crown, and Life and Mind are the links between the two;[46] Matter is the form and body of what man realizes as Spirit;[47] "Nature being a complex unity and not a collection of unrelated phenomena, there can be no unbridgeable gulf between the material existence and this vital or desire world";[48] "The world is a differentiated unity, a manifold oneness, not a constant attempt at compromise between eternal dissonances, not an everlasting struggle between irreconcilable opposites."[49]

According to Aurobindo there is a "sevenfold chord of Being": Pure Being, Pure Conscious Power, Pure Bliss, Supermind, Mind, Life, and Matter.[50] The first three are the original, fundamental divine principles; they are the universal states of consciousness to which man can rise. The last three form a lower hemisphere of manifestation; they are powers of the three spiritual principles. They are separated from their spiritual sources, and show a divided existence instead of their true undivided existence. The fourth principle, the Supermind, is consciousness manifesting unity in infinite multiplicity. It is "the secret Wisdom which upholds both our Knowledge and our Ignorance".[51] Supermind is the way of mediation between the divine and the human. The veil between

45 *Śvestāsatara Upanishad,* VI, 12. Hume translation.
46 *The Synthesis of Yoga,* p. 31.
47 *The Life Divine,* p. 222.
48 *The Synthesis of Yoga,* p. 516.
49 *The Life Divine,* p. 221.
50 *The Life Divine,* p. 241.
51 *The Life Divine,* p. 242.

Mind and Supermind must be rent in order for man to enter his true destiny, the divine life.[52] While *Brahman* is appropriately designated as *Sachchidananda, Brahman* is also Supermind, Mind, Life, and Matter. The cosmos is a working out of the Being of *Brahman.* Without this manifestation *Brahman* would not be the All. The world process is not a regretable fate, nor a material necessity, nor a moral retribution, nor a tragic experiment, but a joyous expression of fullness of Being. It is as fitting that *Brahman* be manifest in the lowest planes of Matter as in the highest planes of Spirit: "Matter means the involution of the conscious delight of existence in self-oblivious force and in a self-dividing, infinitesimally disaggregated form of substance."[53] Therefore Being is not separate from Becoming. *Brahman* is not separate from the world, but is present in it, constitutive of it, inherent in its every atom and in its boundless expansion and extension.[54] The material universe is the result of the descent of all the other principles into Matter. Matter is the "extreme fragmentation of the Infinite",[55] an "inferior self-expression of limiting mind, confined life and dividing body",[56] and a "subordinate power",[57] but it is still a "product" of *Brahman,*[58] a "mode" of *Brahman,*[59] and *Brahman* itself: "Brahman is not only the cause and supporting power and indwelling principle of the universe, he is also its material and its sole material. Matter also is Brahman and is nothing other than or different from Brahman."[60]

The relation between *Brahman* and the physical universe is not a creator-created relationship in either the Hebrew sense of a designer of primordial stuff or the Christian sense of creation *ex nihilo*; rather the relation is one of manifestation. Aurobindo uses

52 There is striking similarity between Supermind in Aurobindo and the Logos in Johannine Christianity.
53 *The Synthesis of Yoga,* p. 512.
54 Aurobindo described electrons and atoms as "eternal somnambulists" – reminiscent of Liebnitz's sleeping monads. *The Life Divine,* p. 634.
55 *The Life Divine,* p. 219.
56 *The Synthesis of Yoga,* p. 530.
57 *The Life Divine,* p. 242.
58 *The Life Divine,* p. 687.
59 *The Life Divine,* p. 223.
60 *The Life Divine,* p. 222.

three words to denote this relationship: "manifestation", "devolution", and "involution". "Devolution" and "involution" connote retrogade development or degeneration. Even though Aurobindo does speak of the movement as a "descent" and a "lapse", still he does not believe that *Brahman* degenerates in becoming Mind, Life, and Matter. He would have avoided confusion if he had always referred to the relation of *Brahman* to the world as a manifestation.

Matter, then, is not a falling from divine status, a darkening of divine light, but "Matter is Sachchidananda represented to His own mental experience as a formal basis of objective knowledge, action and delight of existence." [61] It is the form and body of Spirit, "a basis for the self-expression of the Spirit".[62] Although Matter is the last principle in the descent from Pure Spirit, it is the first principle of the ascent back to Spirit.[63] The physical body – the most immediate form in which Matter is presented to man – is neither to be despised nor neglected. The physical body is the material starting-point of the ascent to the divine life; the perfection of the body is part of that goal; and upon reaching the goal the body cannot be excluded, for "if we reject the mental and physical in our attraction to the spiritual, we do not fulfil God integrally, nor satisfy the conditions of His self-manifestation. . . . However high we may climb, even though it be to the Non-Being itself, we climb ill if we forget our base." [64] The evolutionary ascent to the Spirit is an evolution of all planes of being, and no lower plane is to be sloughed off in the attainment of salvation: "there must be a realisation and dynamisation in earth-life and in Matter not only of Mind but of all that is above it, all that has descended indeed but is still concealed in earth-life and Matter." [65] This conception of an integral liberation is strikingly broader than the Sāṅkhya view in which *prakṛti* vanishes like a shy maiden and the Advaita Vedāta view in which the material world is at last recognized as an illusion.

[61] *The Life Divine*, p. 220.
[62] *The Life Divine*, p. 573.
[63] *The Life Divine*, p. 237.
[64] *The Life Divine*, p. 37.
[65] *The Life Divine*, p. 592.

If Matter is *Brahman*, and if Matter contains all the powers of the levels of being involved in its manifestation, then Matter is not dead, and the planes of existence of its manifestation are also capable of being evolved out of Matter. Matter is more than gas and chemicals, for it evolves Life and Mind, and eventually Supermind and the higher levels of Spiritual Being. All that evolves is always in Matter because Matter involved from Spirit. Hence, evolution from Matter to Spirit is an inverse manifestation of the involution from Spirit to Matter. The immanent higher planes, although veiled, exert pressure upon Matter "to deliver out of itself their principles and powers which might conceivably otherwise have slept imprisoned in the rigidity of the material formula".[66] This evolution is a slow, difficult struggle at the lower levels. There is a graduated necessary succession: "first the evolution of Matter, next the evolution of Life in Matter, then the evolution of Mind in Living Matter, and in this last stage an animal evolution followed by a human evolution".[67] The evolution up to the appearance of man is an unconscious evolution tending chiefly to survival, but to a lesser degree to perfection. Aurobindo believed that the formula, "the survival of the fittest", which he ascribed to "Darwinism" (it was Herbert Spencer's), was an attempt to express the truth "that only a greater and greater perfection can assure a continuous permanence, a lasting survival".[68] However, Aurobindo's interpretation of evolution has teleological aspects which Darwin repudiated in his theory of natural selection. The whole trend and goal of evolution according to Aurobindo is "to manifest what is from the first occult within".[69] Darwin would have rejected the concept of a "goal" in evolution, and he would have been thoroughly dumbfounded by the idea of an "occult within" which is to be manifested.

Man is the highest development of the terrestrial evolution. He might be described as the end of the evolution up to the level of self-consciousness and as the means of evolution beyond self-

[66] *The Life Divine*, pp. 237-238.
[67] *The Life Divine*, pp. 744-745.
[68] *The Life Divine*, p. 184.
[69] *The Life Divine*, p. 588.

consciousness. If struggle be the hallmark of the pre-human evolution, harmony is the hallmark of the post-human evolution. "Man is the instrument of an evolution which wears at first the mask of a struggle, but grows more and more into its truer and deeper sense of a constant wise adjustment and must take on in a rising scale the deepest truth and significance – now only underlying the adjustment and struggle – of a universal harmony."[70] The aim of the first evolution is to be; the aim of the second is to be perfect. Man is the being in whom the second evolution must be realized: "Man himself may well be a thinking and living laboratory in whom and with whose conscious cooperation she [i.e. Nature] wills to work out the superman, the god."[71] If this is the case, then it is not strange that the "earliest preoccupation of man in his awakened thoughts", "his inevitable and ultimate preoccupation", and "the highest which his thought can envisage" is "the impulse towards perfection, the search after pure Truth and unmixed Bliss, the sense of a secret immortality".[72]

Man may be regarded as an animal life emerging out of matter, or as a mind in a physical body, but he is more correctly "a spirit using the mind, life and body for an individual and a communal experience and self-manifestation in the universe".[73] He is the greatest of all living beings because he is "the most discontented".[74] He, unlike the lower animals, is aware of imperfections and limitations, and feels there is something to be attained beyond what he now is. "He is the first son of earth who becomes vaguely aware of God within him, of his immortality or of his need of immortality, and the knowledge is a whip that drives and a cross of crucifixion until he is able to turn it into a source of infinite light and joy and power."[75] This urge is the inner driving of the Spirit that he is toward the emergence of higher levels of being, toward the full manifestation of Sachchidananda. This is the paradox and the glory of man: he is to achieve the divine life in an animal body;

70 *The Synthesis of Yoga,* p. 802.
71 *The Life Divine,* p. 5.
72 *The Life Divine,* p. 3.
73 *The Synthesis of Yoga,* p. 713.
74 *The Life Divine,* p. 46.
75 *The Life Divine,* p. 227.

he is "to become and to live as a universal being".[76] Man is the vehicle in which the *Brahman* seeks to emerge most completely. Man exists in order to disclose *Brahman*. His importance is that he gives to the world for the first time a development of consciousness by which a full self-discovery becomes possible, a fulfilment and realization of God in life. "The ascent to the divine Life is the human journey, the work of works, the acceptable Sacrifice. This alone is man's real business in the world and the justification of his existence, without which he would be only on insect crawling among other ephemeral insects on a speck of surface mud and water which has managed to form itself amid the appalling immensities of the physical universe."[77] Man, the creature of evolution, must now consciously evolve and exceed himself; his partial being must become a complete being, his partial consciousness an integral consciousness, and his individual self a cosmic Self and a universal delight in existence. Man must enlarge himself without losing himself; he must become God without ceasing to be man.

Man is the first being in which consciousness appears, and it is through his consciousness that he is able to achieve the inner look and thus assist in the evolution of the Supermind and the three levels of Spiritual Reality. The "malady of the world"[78] is that individuals seldom find their real Self, and hence delay the realization of the divine life. Consciousness, for Aurobindo, is not synonymous with mentality; rather consciousness is at work in all forces in the universe. There are three sorts of consciousness: a subconscient consciousness in vital and even material movements; a mental consciousness at work in all things said to possess a mind; and a superconscient consciouness which reaches up to the Divine. Mental beings are conscious even in moments which appear to be unconscious, such as a deep sleep or a swoon. In the waking state "what we call then our consciousness is only a small selection from our entire conscious being".[79]

The great tragedy of man is that though he has evolved as a

76 *The Life Divine,* p. 103.
77 *The Life Divine,* pp. 42-43.
78 *The Life Divine,* p. 204.
79 *The Life Divine,* p. 80.

conscious being, he directs his knowing largely to externals. Hence he cannot find his real self nor the real Self of the world in which he lives. He limits his knowledge to his surface existence, "a hasty, incompetent and fragmentary translation of a little out of the much we are".[80] He infers the nature of the whole from the analysis of the part, forgetting that not even the part can be known in the absence of knowledge of the whole. This self-imposed circumscription of self-awareness results in the identification of self with the body, or the life, or the mind: "The Soul forgetting itself experiences only this single knot in Matter and says 'I am this body'. . . . The Soul, still forgetting itself, says 'I am this life'. . . . The Soul identifies itself with this mental dynamo or station and says 'I am this mind'."[81] The self is thus identified with the limitations and exclusions of the ego. The self is thought to be something which has individualized itself and only exists so long as it is individualized. Aurobindo writes, "The formation of a mental and vital ego tied to the body-sense was the first great labour of the cosmic Life in its progressive evolution; for this was the means it found for creating out of matter a conscious individual."[82] And he adds, "The dissolution of this limiting ego is the one condition, the necessary means for this very cosmic Life to arrive at its divine fruition: for only so can the conscious individual find either his transcendent self or his true Person."[83] Until man turns his vision inward, he is separated from other selves and from God; in other words, he is separated from his own true being. He lives in a false relationship with his environment. He does not yet understand that the limited ego is only an intermediate phenomenon necessary as a link in the total evolutionary development. He has yet to discover that he must exceed the ego to become his true Self, and that the awareness of his real Being is the ultimate meaning of individual and terrestrial existence. But man does not become *Brahman*; he is *Brahman*. The self is "the Divine in the individual ascending back out of limited Nature to its own proper divinity".[84]

[80] *The Life Divine*, p. 205.
[81] *The Synthesis of Yoga*, pp. 383, 384, 385.
[82] *The Synthesis of Yoga*, p. 406.
[83] *The Synthesis of Yoga*, p. 406.
[84] *The Life Divine*, p. 140.

The ego is but a trembling ray on the surface. But the self does not lie on the surface: "Our ego is only a face of the universal being and has no separate existence; our apparent separative individuality is only a surface movement and behind it our real individuality stretches out to unity with all things and upward to oneness with the transcendent Divine Infinity."[85] "In our depths we ourselves are that One."[86]

According to Aurobindo one of the most serious errors made by Indian philosophers has been the denial of the reality of the individual self. The Buddhists and the followers of Śaṅkara have created this false idea. Aurobindo is less critical of the Buddhists, possibly because they have the grace to deny frankly the reality of the self, whereas the Advaitic Māyāvādins admit a *Jīvātman* in their system, but only as a concession to "normal language and ideas".[87] Aurobindo finds this denial of a real individual self particularly puzzling in its implications for liberation. On the one hand the Advaitins seem to deny altogether the reality of liberation, since according to their doctrine of *māyā* there is no self that is bound and can be released. On the other hand the Advaitins assert the reality of liberation and thus imply the reality of an individual self. Aurobindo says they try "to escape by a confusion out of a confusion".[88] "The individual soul can only cut the knot of ego by a supreme act of egoism, an exclusive attachment to its own individual salvation which amounts to an absolute assertion of its separate existence in Maya. We are led to regard other souls as if they were figments of our mind and their salvation unimportant, our soul alone as if it were entirely real and its salvation the one thing that matters. I come to regard my personal escape from bondage as real while other souls who are equally myself remain behind in the bondage!"[89] So the Advaitins end in a paradox: if they insist on the *māyā* of the individual soul, they must give up

[85] *The Life Divine*, p. 362.
[86] *The Life Divine*, p. 97.
[87] *The Life Divine*, p. 669.
[88] *The Life Divine*, p. 39.
[89] *The Life Divine*, p. 39. See Dhirendramohan Datta, "Inward and Outward Advaita Vedānta", *The Philosophical Quarterly* of The Indian Institute of Philosophy, Vol. 30, No. 3 (1957), pp. 165-172.

liberation, and if they insist on liberation, they must give up the doctrine of *māyā*. But the Advaitins will give up neither, so they seek "the escape of an illusory non-existent soul from an illusory non-existent bondage in an illusory non-existent world".[90]

The Sāṅkhya philosophers with their theory of many *puruṣas* reflecting the movements of a cosmic energy, the *prakṛti*, and the Viśiṣṭādvaita Vedāntists with their qualified monism, thinks Aurobindo, correctly protested against "the metaphysical excesses of Buddhistic Nihilism and illusionist Adwaita".[91] They insisted that a "persistent soul-existence is the real Individuality which stands behind the constant mutations of the thing we call our personality".[92] "It is not a limited ego but a thing in itself infinite; it is in truth the Infinite itself consenting from one plane of its being to reflect itself in a perpetual soul-experience", says Aurobindo.[93] The mind constantly errs in thinking of its individuality as a separate fact, an independent ego, rather than as "a form of Oneness".[94] Thus it tries to make the ego the center of its own universe rather than as one form of the *Brahman*. The true individual is "the Divine extended in multiplicity".[95] The diversity brings out the true unity of the *Brahman*, for it reveals that Oneness can show itself in Becoming and still not cease to be Oneness. It reveals the manifold richness of the *Brahman*. Individuality has value and reality of itself which is veiled from *Brahman* and which must be realized. Expression in the multiplicity of individuals is a necessary means of *Brahman's* self-knowledge, concludes Aurobindo: "Our surface reason is prone to conclude that the diversity may be unreal, an appearance only, but if we look a little deeper we shall see that a real diversity brings out the real Unity, shows it as it were in its utmost capacity, reveals all that it can be and is in itself, delivers from its whiteness of hue the many ones of colour that are fused together there; Oneness finds itself infinitely in what seems to us to be a falling away from its oneness, but is really an

90 *The Life Divine,* p. 39.
91 *The Synthesis of Yoga,* p. 429.
92 *The Synthesis of Yoga,* p. 429.
93 *The Synthesis of Yoga,* p. 429.
94 *The Life Divine,* p. 159.
95 *The Life Divine,* p. 616.

inexhaustible diverse display of unity. This is the miracle, the Maya of the universe, yet perfectly logical, natural and a matter of course to the self-vision and self-experience of the Infinite."[96]

Man is the highest form that individuality has taken on earth, because man has the potentiality of self-discovery, and hence the possibility of achieving the liberating knowledge. Man can become the instrument of the self-manifestation of Reality at the critical turning point of involution and evolution.[97] He also has the freedom to remain ignorant of his true being and thus frustrate the full manifestation of the *Brahman*: "This individual being of ours is that by which ignorance is possible to self-conscious mind, but it is also that by which liberation into the spiritual being is possible and the enjoyment of divine immortality. It is not the Eternal in His transcendence or in His cosmic being who arrives at this immortality; it is the individual who rises into self-knowledge, in him it is possessed and by him it is made effective."[98] This is the grandeur and also the terrible responsibility of man: God must be revealed to Himself in man. This revelation is a dual revelation, for it also reveals man's true nature to himself. With the liberating experience comes the disappearance of the ego, but not the destruction or absorption of the true individual: "The immense importance of the individual being, which increase as he rises in the scale is the most remarkable and significant fact of a universe which started without consciousness and without individuality in an undifferentiated Nescience. This importance can only be justified if the Self as individual is not less real than the Self as cosmic Being or Spirit and both are powers of the Eternal. It is only so that can be explained the necessity for the growth of the individual and his discovery of himself as a condition for the discovery of the cosmic Self and Consciousness of the supreme Reality. . . . it is no longer sufficient to suppose an illusory or temporary individual, created in each form by the play of consciousness; individuality can no longer be conceived as an accompaniment of play of consciousness in figure of body which may or may

96 *The Life Divine,* p. 308.
97 *The Life Divine,* p. 349; *The Synthesis of Yoga,* p. 911.
98 *The Synthesis of Yoga,* pp. 499-500.

not survive the form, may or may not prolong its false continuity of self from form to form, from life to life, but which certainly need not do it . . . . But if the individual is a persistent reality, an eternal portion or power of the Eternal, if his growth of consciousness is the means by which the Spirit in things discloses its being, the cosmos reveals itself as a conditioned manifestation of the play of the eternal One in the being of Sachchidananda with the eternal Many."[99]

All that is abolished in liberation is man's ignorance; God, the world, and the individual self – the true integral self – remain. The liberated self no longer divorces itself from other selves; it extends its perception of unity horizontally to other selves as well as vertically to God: "the liberation and self-fulfilment of others is as much our own concern, – we might almost say, our divine self-interest, – as our own liberation."[100] This, for Aurobindo, is the truth so beautifully expressed in the Buddhist doctrine of the *bodhisattva*, the being who vows not to enter Nirvana until he can take all mankind with him.[101] This horizontal dimension must be extended until all forms are seen as forms of the Divine: "Our knowledge is still imperfect in us, love incomplete if even when we know That which surpasses all forms and manifestations, we cannot still accept the Divine in creature and object, in man, in the kind, in the animal, in the tree, in the flower, in the work of our hands, in the Nature-Force which is then no longer to us the blind action of a material machinery but a face and power of the Universal Shakti: for in these things too is the presence of the Eternal."[102]

Aurobindo calls the liberated state "the divine life". The being in that state is "the Gnostic Being", and the avenue to that state is "the integral yoga". The integral yoga is an extension of the evolution which has brought man into being. By using any of the three principal yogas – the yoga of works, the yoga of knowledge, and the yoga of love – in the integral yoga the other two yogas

[99] *The Life Divine*, p. 673.
[100] *The Synthesis of Yoga*, p. 506.
[101] *The Life Divine*, p. 40.
[102] *The Synthesis of Yoga*, pp. 180-181.

will be perfected. Full self-perfection is the essence of the integral yoga. Many rebirths may be needed by the immortal self for the progressive realization of the divine life. The divine life is an inner life, but not an introverted life. Aurobindo does not think of the divine life as a heavenly bliss removed from earthly pains and earthly joys. The divine life is a life of great diversity in a fundamental unity. The stages of its realization will not be rejected in the fruition. Earth, the basis will be retained, but it will be a transformed earth. Life here, and not life elsewhere, is the field of the action of the Spirit. In the divine life the liberated self will be "equally one with the Divine in all his planes, and able to live in him equally in the Self and in the manifestation".[103] It is upon the earth, as well as on other planes of existence, that the glory and the joy of God will be made manifest.[104] Even the human body will participate in the divine life: "The body will be turned by the power of the spiritual consciousness into a true and fit and perfectly responsive instrument of the Spirit."[105] Self-realization is not "a Single white monotone",[106] for "diversity in oneness is the law of the manifestation".[107] The divine life will be "a greater and happier constant miracle".[108]

In the divine life the individual self, while realizing its eternal oneness with the *Brahman*, will have relations with the *Brahman*: "I am one with God in my being and yet I can have relations with Him in my experience. I, the liberated individual, can enjoy the Divine in His transcendence, unified with Him, and enjoy at the same time the Divine in other individuals and in His cosmic being."[109] Aurobindo appreciates the cry of the poet "when in a homely and vigorous metaphor he claimed the right of the soul to enjoy for ever the ecstacy of its embrace of the Supreme. 'I do not want to become sugar', he wrote, 'I want to eat sugar'."[110]

[103] *The Synthesis of Yoga*, p. 824.
[104] *The Live Divine*, p. 150.
[105] *The Life Divine*, p. 875.
[106] *The Life Divine*, p. 789.
[107] *The Life Divine*, p. 790.
[108] *The Life Divine*, p. 947.
[109] *The Life Divine*, p. 338.
[110] *The Synthesis of Yoga*, p. 430.

In the divine life, says Aurobindo, lover and Beloved "are unified and difference is abolished in the ecstacy of a divine oneness, and yet in the mystery of this unification there is a sole existence of the Beloved but no extinction or absorption of the lover." [111]

[111] *The Synthesis of Yoga*, p. 413.

GLOSSARY

āchārya – spiritual teacher or guide
adhikāribheda – principle of taking a student where he is and leading him to liberation
adhyāsa – false identification of the self and the body
adhyātma śāstra – self-knowledge; inner science
advaita – non-dual
ahaṁkāra – self-consciousness; self-awareness; principle of egoism in Sāṅkhya
ajīva – non-vital principle
ākāsha – ether; space
alīka – false
amśa – part of whole
ānanda – bliss; happiness
aṅgas – elements of yogic discipline
antaḥkarana – internal organ
aparā vidyā – lower knowledge; knowledge of world of space and time
asat – unreal; non-being
aśrama – institution for spiritual retreat and study
āstika – orthodox
ātman – self or soul usually in a cosmic sense
ātmavidyā – self-knowledge
avatāra – earthly appearance of a deity
avidyā – ignorance
avyakta – unevolved

bhakti – love or devotion directed to a deity

brāhmaṇas – directions for sacrificial rites
buddhi – mind; intellect; instrument of cognition

chid, chit – consciousness
citta – instrument of thought in Yoga system

dravya – substance

guṇa – element or quality of things
guru – spiritual teacher

iṣṭa-devatā – chosen deity
iti – this
iva – as it were

jīva, jīvātman – individual self or soul

kaivalya – independence
kalpa – cycle of cosmic activity
kāmā – desire, usually sexual desire
karma – the law of the deed; causality in spiritual and moral life of man
kleshas – handicaps
koṣas – sheaths of the soul or self

līlā – play; pastime

mahat – great; the Great One; mind in Sāṅkhya
manas – mind as the organizer of sensations into perceptions
mandala – literally, a circle; the *Rig Veda* is divided into ten Mandalas
mantra, sūkta – hymn or prayer to the gods
māyā – illusion; principle of the unreality of the world

nāstika – unorthodox
neti – not this
Nirguṇa Brahman – the Brahman without characteristics

OM – mystical sign used in prayers to gods

parā vidyā – higher knowledge; knowledge of the Brahman
Paramātman – the Supreme Self
prakara – mode
prakṛti – object; matter; active principle in Sāṅkhya
puruṣa – subject; spirit; passive principle in Sāṅkhya
purushottama – the Highest Person

rajas – *guṇa* of action
rishi – seer; sage

sach, sat – being
Sachchidānanda, Satchidānanda – Divine Being, Divine Consciousness, Divine Bliss
sādhanā – spiritual discipline
Saguṇa Brahman – the Brahman with characteristics
sākṣin – witness
samādhi – concentration
samsāra – reincarnation
samsārin – migrating self or soul
sannyasi – Hindu who devotes himself to his liberation
śarira – the body of God
sat, sach – being
sattva – *guṇa* of consciousness
siddhānta – the final view
skandhas – collection of physical and psychological states which is the self in Buddhism
smriti – remembered; non-revealed
śruti – revealed
sūkta, mantra – hymn or prayer to the gods
sūtras – aphorisms used as memory aids in study of sacred literature

tamas – *guṇa* of restraint
tapasya – life of meditation

vaiśvānara ātman – the Universal Self
vidyā, vijñāna – knowledge; consciousness; awareness; cognition
viśesana – inseparable attribute

yoga – spiritual exercise leading to enlightenment

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in reconstructing the creature that made the footprint. And Lo! it is our own."

The author of this volume contends that the goal of Indian philosophy may be described metaphysically as self-knowledge *(ātman-vidyā)* and religiously as self-liberation *(mokṣa)*. This goal is dual: (1) Rational cognition *(jñāna)* attained through the means of discursive reasoning *(pramānas)*, and (2) Psychological realization *(darśana)* realized through the methods of meditation *(sādhanās)*. In this volume the author presents and analyzes five principal theories of the self in Indian philosophy: the non-conscious self of Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, the evolutionary self of Sāmkhya-Yoga, the unconditioned self of Advaita Vedānta, the conditioned self of Viśiṣṭādvaita, and the integral self of Sri Aurobindo. The author plans to consider the methods of psychological realization in a later study.